WELCOME

to Alberta

Information for Immigrants

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

the people & workplace department

This book is for adult immigrants who have just moved to Alberta. It provides general information that will help you learn about:

- Where to get help
- Living in Alberta
- Money and banking
- Employment
- Education
- Health care
- Laws and the Legal System

This publication is available in a web version at **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/welcometoalberta** and in an **Adobe PDF** version through the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website—Alberta's leading on-line source for career, learning and employment information. To access the **PDF** version or to order a **print** copy, visit **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**

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12360–142 Street
Edmonton, AB T5L 4X9
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Fax (780) 422-9750 Telephone (780) 427-5775
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This information was accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of printing. Labour market information and educational programs are subject to change, and you are encouraged to confirm with additional sources of information when making career, education and employment decisions.

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The front cover artwork is an artistic composite showing a blend of urban and rural scenes of Alberta.

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WELCOME to Alberta: Information for Immigrants

The Legislature Building in Edmonton, the capital city of Alberta

Welcome to Alberta provides basic general information about settling in Alberta for adult immigrants. It is published on the Internet (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/welcometoalberta**). Print copies are available free of charge through immigrant-serving agencies located in communities throughout Alberta.

The information in this guide is up to date as of June 2005. For more recent or detailed information, we suggest you visit the websites or contact the offices listed throughout this publication, or talk to a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency. If you do not have a computer, see the Phone, Internet and Mail Services section in the Living in Alberta chapter for information about how to access the Internet free of charge in Alberta.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the many individuals from community and government organizations and private corporations whose valuable help and feedback have made this guide possible.

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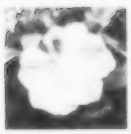

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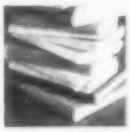

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HELP is Available

Welcome

Immigrants have always played an important role in the growth and development of Canada. Our citizens want to help you become part of this country. In Alberta, we have many services that will assist you in creating a new life.

Arrival Checklist

There are a number of things you should do as soon as possible after you arrive in Alberta:

- ❑ Register with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan so you will not have to pay for some health care services. You must register within three months of your arrival to Alberta. See the section Paying for Care and Equipment in the Health Care chapter of this book.
- ❑ Apply for a Social Insurance Number. Employers will ask you for this number when they hire you. You also may need a Social Insurance Number to apply for certain government programs.
- ❑ Open an account at a financial institution such as a bank, credit union or Alberta Treasury Branch.
- ❑ Visit an immigrant-serving agency. Immigrant-serving agencies provide orientation services and information for immigrants. They also can provide information about where to meet people whose ethnic, cultural or religious background is similar to yours.
- ❑ If you will be applying for employment or training, you may need to have your qualifications documents assessed or translated. Alberta Advanced Education's International Qualification Assessment Service can help. Find more information in the Improving Your Qualifications section of Evaluating Your Work Options in the Employment chapter.
- ❑ If you need to improve your English language skills, find out where English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered in your area and whether you qualify for government-funded language training programs.

- ❑ If you have children less than 18 years of age, register them for school. You also should read the information in *Welcome to Alberta* about the Canada Child Tax Benefit program in the chapter called Money and Banking.

For more information, visit the Government of Alberta website at **www.gov.ab.ca**. Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Events in Your Life and select Moving To or Around Alberta. When you call from anywhere in the province, you can reach Alberta government offices by telephone at no cost. See the Making Telephone Calls information in the Living in Alberta chapter.

If your occupation is regulated in Alberta, moving may also require registering with the appropriate provincial regulatory organization. For more information, see Evaluating Your Options in the Employment chapter.

Immigrant-Serving Agencies

Immigrant-serving agencies provide information and guidance for newcomers after they arrive in Alberta. These organizations help immigrants find the services they need (for example, health care services, language training, family services or interpreter services).

Counsellors at immigrant-serving agencies often speak several languages and many are immigrants or refugees themselves. They understand the challenges involved in settling in a new country and can make the process much easier for you.

Following is a list of immigrant-serving agencies operating in the province. New Albertans are encouraged to contact the organizations located nearest them. If you are calling from outside the city in which an organization is located, you must use the appropriate telephone area code (the three numbers in brackets).

Alberta agencies help immigrants who come to the province from many countries around the world.

Please note that this information may change. Check with the organization, the Alberta Career Information Hotline or the AHRE service centre in your area for the latest information.

Calgary

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
3rd Floor, 120-17 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2S 2T2
Telephone: (403) 262-2006
Fax: (403) 262-2033
E-mail: contact@ccis-calgary.ab.ca
Website: **www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca**

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
12th Floor, 910-7 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2P 3N8
Telephone: (403) 265-1120
Fax: (403) 266-2486
E-mail: info@calgaryimmigrantaid.ca
Website: **www.calgaryimmigrantaid.ca**

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
#200, 138-4th Avenue SE
Calgary, AB T2G 4Z6
Telephone: (403) 263-4414
Fax: (403) 264-3914
E-mail: general@ciwa-online.com
Website: **www.ciwa-online.com**

Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
#125, 920-36th Street NE
Calgary, AB T2A 6L8
Telephone: (403) 569-3325
Fax: (403) 248-5041
E-mail: newcomer@cmcn.ab.ca
Website: **www.cmcn.ab.ca**

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Edmonton

ASSIST Community Services Centre
9653-105A Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 0M3
Telephone: (780) 429-3111
Fax: (780) 424-7837
Website:
www.telusplanet.net/public/eccsc/english/main.htm

Catholic Social Services-Immigration
and Settlement Service
10709-105 Street
Edmonton, AB T5H 2X3
Telephone: (780) 424-3545
Fax: (780) 425-6627
Website: **www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca**

Changing Together—A Centre for Immigrant Women
3rd Floor, 10010-105 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 1C4
Telephone: (780) 421-0175
Fax: (780) 426-2225
E-mail: changing@interbaun.com
Website: **www.changingtogether.com**

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Suite 201, 10720-113 Street
Edmonton, AB T5H 3H8
Telephone: (780) 474-8445
Fax: (780) 477-0883
E-mail: eisa@compusmart.ab.ca
Website: **www.compusmart.ab.ca/eisa**

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
101, 10010-107A Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 4H8
Telephone: (780) 424-7709
Fax: (780) 424-7736
E-mail: mcnedm@emcn.ab.ca
Website: **www.emcn.ab.ca**

Other Cities

Global Friendship Immigration Center
2nd Floor, 120-1st Avenue East
Brooks, AB T1R 1C5
Telephone: (403) 362-6115
Fax: (403) 362-6337
E-mail: gfic@monarch.net

Y.M.C.A. - Wood Buffalo-Immigrant
Settlement Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K6
Telephone: (780) 743-2970
Fax: (780) 743-2973
Website: **www.ymca.woodbuffalo.org**

Immigrant Settlement Services,
Grande Prairie Regional College
#202, 9924-100 Avenue
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0T9
Telephone: (780) 538-4452
Fax: (780) 532-8857
E-mail: iss.gp@telus.net

Lethbridge Family Services-Immigrant Services
508-6 Street South
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2E2
Telephone: (403) 320-1589
Fax: (403) 317-7654
E-mail: lfsis@theboss.com
Website: **www.lethbridge-family-services.com/immigrant.cfm**

Saamis Immigration Services Association
177-12 Street NE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 5T6
Telephone: (403) 504-1188
Fax: (403) 504-1211
E-mail: sisa@telusplanet.net
Website: **www.sisa-medicinehat.com**

Catholic Social Services: Immigration and Settlement
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue
Red Deer, AB T4N 6C2
Telephone: (403) 346-8818
Fax: (403) 347-5220
Website: **www.intentr.com/immigrantctr**

Central Alberta Refugee Effort-C.A.R.E. Committee
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue
Red Deer, AB T4N 6C2
Telephone: (403) 346-8818
Fax: (403) 347-5220
E-mail: care2@telusplanet.net
Website: **www.intentr.com/immigrantctr**

Emergencies

Emergencies are situations in which you need immediate help. There are special telephone numbers to call for emergencies requiring fire, police or ambulance services. Emergency numbers are usually listed inside the front cover or on the first page of the telephone book.

In Edmonton, Calgary and most of the rest of the province, the main emergency telephone number is 911. However, each municipality (city, town or rural community) is responsible for its own emergency phone system. In some areas, emergency numbers are different than 911.

For areas that do not have a 911 phone emergency system, you should call the local police, fire or emergency medical services centre directly. These numbers will be listed in the emergency services pages of your local telephone book, usually on the inside front cover or the first page.

Call 911 only if there is an emergency that requires the attention of fire fighters, police officers, ambulance attendants or medical personnel. You could be fined for making a non-emergency call. Children should be taught how and when to use the emergency number.

In Edmonton and Calgary, emergency operators may be able to help you in your own language. Even if you cannot communicate with the operator, call the emergency number and do not hang up. The operator will trace the source of your call and send help.

If you can, tell the emergency operator:

- what the emergency is and what type of help you need.
  For example, say, "I need an ambulance" OR "Please send the police" OR "I wish to report an accident."

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- where the emergency is.
  For example, say, "Please come to (address)" OR "I am at the corner of (name) Street and (name) Avenue."
- your name, address and telephone number.

Unless you are over 65 years of age, you will be required to pay for ambulance services. For information about medical insurance and other programs that may cover these costs, see Paying for Care and Equipment.

In Canada, parents teach their children to trust police officers. Police protect society, assist people in need and help to ensure that people are treated according to law. If you do not need emergency assistance but want to talk to a police officer, look for the correct numbers to call in the white pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

For other types of emergencies (for example, problems relating to natural gas, water, power, drug addiction, suicide prevention, sexual assault), there are other 24-hour emergency numbers. These numbers are usually listed near the front of your telephone book.

Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters provide temporary accommodation for people who have no money and no other place to go. In Alberta, many communities have different types of emergency shelters for:

- young people
- homeless men or women
- abused women and their children.

Emergency shelters provide a safe environment for a short period of time free of charge. Telephone numbers for emergency shelters are usually listed near the front of the telephone book. Addresses of women's emergency shelters are not listed so abusers cannot find their victims. Abused women are given an address to go to when they call. Women's shelters may offer food, essential transportation, clothing, medical and dental assistance, crisis counselling, housing assistance, childcare or information free of charge.

For more information about crisis services in Alberta, visit the Government of Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**). Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Events in Your Life, then Dealing with a Crisis.

Food Banks

Food banks provide free food to people who do not have enough money to purchase what they need. To find a food bank near you, see the Alberta Food Bank Network Association website (**www.afbna.ca**) or look in your telephone book under Food Bank or the name of your community.

HELP is Available

Income Support

Albertans place a high value on work and self-sufficiency. However, the Government of Alberta may provide financial benefits to individuals and families who do not have the resources to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. The amount of assistance varies depending on each individual's situation (for example, financial resources, ability to work and the number of children in the family). Income Support is part of a system of supports called Alberta Works.

If you are a refugee claimant or permanent resident and do not have the resources to meet your basic needs, you may qualify for income support. Tourists, students, temporary workers, persons illegally in Canada, persons on a Minister's Permit, or those who have been denied refugee status are not eligible. Refugee claimants are eligible for Income Support if their application for refugee status has been accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

If you were sponsored, your sponsor agreed to support you for a period of time after you arrived in Canada. It is your sponsor's responsibility to pay for what you need. You may be eligible for Income Support:

- if your sponsor has lost a job
- if your sponsor did not fulfill their responsibilities
- if you need to leave an abusive situation or have been abandoned.

For more information, see the Alberta Works website (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/albertaworks**) or call the Income Support Contact Centre at (780) 644-5135 in Edmonton or 1-866-644-5135 toll-free in other Alberta locations. Or call 310-0000 to be connected to the Alberta Human Resources and Employment office nearest you. **You will have to wait until your immigration status has been confirmed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada before you can make an appointment to meet with an intake worker from the Alberta Works program.** Citizenship and Immigration Canada will contact you to confirm whether there is documentation prepared to confirm your immigration status.

If you contact an Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) office for emergency assistance before receiving notification from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, it will be necessary for the Human Resources and Employment staff person to contact the Government of Canada to confirm your status.

Other Services

Libraries

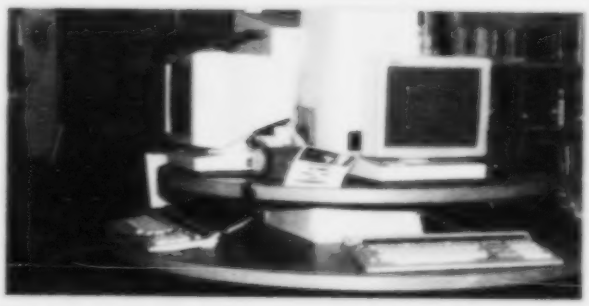
All public libraries provide free information and referral services. Libraries may charge a small annual fee for library membership cards that allow people to borrow books, videotapes and other library materials for a specified period of time. However, you do not need a membership card if you do not take materials out of the library. If you need help finding information about a program or service, ask a reference librarian for assistance. You do not have to provide personal information (for example, your name) to get information from a librarian.

Other Referral Services

Telephone information and referral services are available in Edmonton and Calgary. In either city, you can dial 211 and talk to an information and referral specialist who can connect you to a full range of non-emergency social, health and government services. This telephone service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Social Service Agencies

Government and not-for-profit community agencies offer many services to families and individuals who need information, counselling, help finding work, English as a Second Language (ESL) training, financial assistance or other kinds of help. Many of these services are free and confidential (information about you is not given to other people or organizations).



Some agencies offer specialized services (for example, services designed for people who have disabilities, senior citizens who are 65 years of age or older, parents, unemployed people or women in distress).

There are many ways to learn more about social services in your area:

- talk to a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency
- check the inside front cover and first page of your telephone book
- in Edmonton or Calgary, call the 211 information and referral service
- see the Service Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**)
- see the Inform Alberta website (**www.informalberta.ca**)
- ask for information at your nearest public library.

LIVING in Alberta

The Province of Alberta

Geography and Distances

Alberta covers an area of 661,000 square kilometres (255,000 square miles) that ranges in elevation from the lowlands of the northeast region to the Rocky Mountains of the southwest. For maps of regions, major highways and destinations, visit the Government of Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**). Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Topics; then click on Land and Maps.

Map of Alberta showing major cities and rural centres. Edmonton is the capital city of Alberta.

Cities and Towns

Over the past 100 years, immigrants from many countries have made Alberta their home. Now, immigrants make up a significant percentage of the Alberta population of over 3.2 million people. Approximately one third of Albertans live in and around the city of Calgary, one third live in towns and villages elsewhere in the province and one third live in the greater Edmonton area (which includes several smaller communities around the city).

Edmonton, the provincial capital, is located in central Alberta. Calgary is located 300 kilometres to the south. Smaller cities and towns are scattered throughout the province:

- Lethbridge is 216 km south of Calgary
- Medicine Hat is 293 km southeast of Calgary
- Red Deer is halfway between Calgary and Edmonton
- Fort McMurray is 439 km northeast of Edmonton
- Grande Prairie is 456 km northwest of Edmonton.

Communities across the province offer business opportunities and a full range of health, education and recreation services.

For information about particular communities or regions, see the Community Profiles section of the Alberta First website (**www.albertafirst.com/profiles**). For information about opportunities and services in rural Alberta, visit the Government of Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**). Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Topics; then select Agriculture and Rural Services.

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Weather

Alberta's climate is one of extremes. Weather varies from day to day, from season to season and from one part of the province to another. For example:

- In summer, daytime highs are normally in the 20 to 25°C range but can reach the mid to upper 30s.
- Normal low nighttime temperatures in the driest and coldest winter months, January and February, range from -15 to -25°C, while daytime temperatures range from -5 to -15°C. However, winter temperatures can dip as low as -30 to -40°C and wind can make temperatures feel even colder.
- In winter, chinook winds in the southern part of the province near the mountains can cause temperatures to rise as much as 20°C in less than an hour.
- Daylight hours range from 16 to 18 hours in June to six to eight hours in December.
- Mountain foothill areas get about 600 mm of precipitation (rain or snow) each year. The southeast corner of the province, one of the driest areas in Canada, gets fewer than 350 mm.
- Thunderstorms are common from late May through early September and account for about half of the yearly precipitation.

Environment Canada provides a great deal of information about climate and weather on the Internet:

- For detailed long term climate records in specific locations, see **www.climate.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca**
- For information about current weather conditions and five-day forecasts, see **www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca**
- For links to information about what to do before, during and after extreme weather events such as severe thunderstorms and tornadoes, see **www.pnr.ec.gc.ca/air**

Weather radio stations are operated by Environment Canada and commercial radio and television stations broadcast weather reports and forecasts. **Weather warnings** are issued when severe storms are expected or have been seen in the area.

Winter Clothing

Warm clothing must be worn outdoors during the winter months, especially if the weather is windy as well as cold. Wind increases the rate at which the body loses heat.

In very cold weather, exposed skin will freeze in a very short time, which may result in frostbite (skin turns white and is injured). If this happens, go to a warm place immediately and warm the skin slowly, before it is seriously damaged.

To prevent frostbite, you need to wear warm layers of outer garments as well as regular clothing. Follow these suggestions for staying safe and warm in winter weather:

- It is important to wear a hat because most body heat is lost through the head. Winter hats should cover the ears.
- Winter boots should have a warm inner lining and thick soles with a rough surface to prevent slipping on ice.
- Coats should have a hood and warm lining, and be waterproof and windproof. They should be loose fitting to trap body heat while ensuring air circulation.
- On very cold days, people who must be outdoors for more than a few minutes should wear warm underwear under their regular clothing plus extra wool socks.
- Mittens are usually warmer than gloves.
- In extremely cold weather, scarves that cover the mouth are recommended to protect your lungs.

Paliament building in Ottawa

Government

There are three levels of government in Canada: federal, provincial and local (also called municipal government). Canada is a federation in which powers and responsibilities are divided between federal and provincial governments. For example, the federal government is responsible for defense, foreign policy, immigration and citizenship. Provincial governments are responsible for education, licensing drivers and motor vehicles and regulating professions and trades. Local governments are responsible for public transportation, fire department services and maintaining utilities such as water and sewer services.

For more information, see the Government of Canada fact sheet in the Advice for Newcomers section of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer**).

Languages

Canada has two official languages: English and French. Many other languages also are spoken here but English is the language used in most workplaces and classrooms in Alberta. To work or take an education program in Alberta, you must be able to speak, read and write English well enough to communicate effectively with people who understand only English.

For more information about work-related language competency requirements, see the CERTinfo (Certification and Registration Requirements for Employment in Alberta) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/certinfo**). For information about learning English as a second language, see the English as a Second Language section of *Welcome to Alberta*.

Multiculturalism

The government encourages Canadians from every part of the world to:

- take pride in their language, religion and heritage
- observe their customs and traditions as long as they do not break Canadian laws.

Single family house

Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation

During their first few days in Alberta, some people stay in hotels or motels. The cost generally ranges from $50 to $150 a night. There may be an additional charge if more than two people stay in one room.

For free information about travel and accommodations anywhere in Alberta, see the Travel Alberta website (**www.travelalberta.com**) or call the Travel Alberta toll-free information service at 1-800-252-3782.

Types of Housing

There are many housing options in Alberta:

- **Single family dwellings** are houses that have basements and backyards. Houses may be purchased or rented.
- **Mobile homes** are manufactured houses that can be moved from one piece of land to another. They usually are less expensive than a house to purchase, but you also have to buy or rent a place to put them.
- Most **townhouses** (sometimes called row houses) are several houses joined together. They usually have basements and small yards. They may be purchased or rented.
- Most **apartments** are in large buildings and rented without furniture. When apartment units and townhouses are purchased instead of rented, they are called condominiums.

- **Furnished suites** may be located in large buildings or houses. They usually have two or more rooms, a bathroom and cooking facilities that are separate from other parts of the suite.
- **Individual rooms** in buildings or houses are sometimes rented. People may rent one or two rooms and share a kitchen and bathroom with other residents. Furniture is usually included. When meals are provided, tenants are called boarders.

Subsidized (rental) housing may be provided by the government for people who have low incomes. For more information, talk to a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency or a reference librarian at your local library.

For more information about housing in Canada, see *The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing* published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. To order your free copy, visit the Government of Alberta website at **www.gov.ab.ca**. Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Events in Your Life, then select Moving To or Around Alberta.

Finding Rental Accommodation

There are several ways to find rental housing:

- Ask friends, people at immigrant-serving agencies and others you meet about places to rent.
- Look for Vacancy and For Rent signs in windows and on notice boards.
- Pick up a free copy of the *Home Renters Guide* at local malls or drug stores (note: not all communities publish this guide).
- Look in the Classified section of local newspapers.

Signs and advertisements generally include a telephone number. Call the landlord or building manager to get more information and, if you are still interested, make an appointment to see the place.

If you are not comfortable speaking English, it is a good idea to take an English-speaking friend with you when you go to look at rental accommodation. Carefully examine all of the rooms and make sure the appliances and fixtures (stove, refrigerator, toilet, shower, lights) work properly.

Be sure the building and the unit are secure enough that you would feel safe living there. Many apartments have security systems that allow only those people who have the permission of a tenant to enter the building.

Before you sign a rental application form, ask questions such as the following:

- How much is the rent? Are utilities (water, heat and electricity costs) included in the rent? If not, how much do utilities usually cost each month?
- Keep in mind that telephone service costs are not included in utility costs, and you must purchase your own telephone. Telephones can be purchased at stores selling electronic equipment.
- When must rent be paid? Usually, the rent must be paid by the first day of each month.
- Are there laundry facilities in the building or nearby?

- Where is the nearest bus stop, school or other service you need?
- What safety features (for example, smoke detectors) are there?
- How much is the security (damage) deposit?

A security deposit is money you pay the landlord before moving in. It must not be more than the amount of your first full month's rent. The landlord keeps the money in case you damage the property, do not pay the rent or leave without cleaning properly. If you do no damage, have paid the rent and cleaned the house or apartment before you leave, the landlord must return the money with interest after you move out.

A residential tenancy agreement (lease) is a written contract between the landlord and tenant that says how much the rent is and states the landlord's rules and how long you are required to rent the property. If the landlord has promised to make any repairs or changes, these should be written in the tenancy agreement.

Never sign documents you do not understand. If you need help, contact an immigrant-serving agency or ask a friend who knows English well.

Renting Accommodation

After you decide to rent a place:

- pay the security deposit. Once the deposit is paid, the landlord cannot rent the house or apartment to anyone else.
- arrange to have telephone, electricity, heat and water services connected on the day you expect to move in or the day before (the landlord can tell you how to do this). You will be charged for the amount you use. The cost of having utilities connected is usually included in the first monthly bill you receive.
- get the key from the landlord on the day of the move.

By law, the landlord and tenant must complete an inspection report within one week before or after the day the tenant moves in. It is extremely important to write all existing damage and necessary repairs on the form so the landlord cannot charge you for them when you move out.

Remember to pay power, water, natural gas (if they are not included in the monthly rental fee) and telephone bills promptly. If you do not, services will be disconnected and there will be an additional charge for connecting them again.

Discrimination

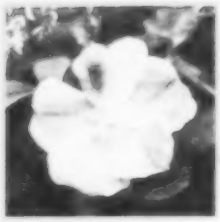
In Alberta, landlords are not allowed to refuse to rent places to people because of their race, religion, colour, gender, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, source of income, physical disability, mental disability or sexual orientation. If a landlord refuses to rent a place to you for any of these reasons, you can complain to the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission.

Landlords **can** refuse to rent a place to you if there are reasonable grounds for refusing. For example, owners of seniors' complexes (apartments or condominiums for people over a specified age) can reasonably refuse to rent to younger people.

Moving Out of Rental Accommodation

When you move out of rental accommodation:

- tell the landlord in writing when you will be moving out. Check your tenancy agreement to find out how much and when notice must be given. For example, you may be required to give at least one month's notice at the same time you pay your last month's rent.
- arrange to have power, water, natural gas and telephone services disconnected when you leave (if they are not included in the monthly rental fee). If you do not, you will continue to be charged for them even after you move out.



- go to a Canada Post outlet and ask for Change of Address cards. Give these cards to friends and organizations to let them know about your new address. For a fee, Canada Post will redirect mail from your old address to your new one for a short period of time.
- clean all rooms and appliances. For example, defrost and clean inside, behind and under the refrigerator and stove; clean the oven; wash windows and floors; and vacuum carpets. If you do not, the cost of cleaning and repair work may be deducted from your security deposit.

Landlord and Tenant Rights

In Alberta, the *Residential Tenancies Act* sets out the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. This law applies to tenants who rent apartments, houses and other self-contained places. It does not apply to boarders or roommates who share living quarters with the landlord. Rooms in the living quarters of the landlord are not included in coverage of the *Residential Tenancies Act* so you should have an agreement in writing that outlines your rights and obligations and those of the landlord.

Landlords renting facilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act* must:

- tell the tenant in writing who the landlord is so the tenant can send notices or other documents to that person.
- pay interest to tenants on security deposits (the rate of interest is set each year by the Government of Alberta).
- provide a reasonably safe and comfortable place for tenants to live. Landlords must ensure the structure of the building is safe, the heating and plumbing systems work, and wind, rain and snow cannot enter the building.
- give tenants at least three months notice in writing before they increase the rent.
- give an acceptable reason for asking tenants who are paying monthly rent to move out (for example, the landlord or a relative is moving in, or the premises have been sold or are going to be torn down). If tenants do not fulfill their responsibilities (for example, they disturb other tenants, damage the building or do not pay the rent on time), landlords can give the tenant 14 days notice to move out.

Except in an emergency, the landlord cannot enter a tenant's home without advance notice or without the tenant's permission. With 24 hours written notice, the landlord can enter the tenant's place to inspect for damage, make repairs, show the place to buyers or show the place to renters if the tenant has given notice to move.

Tenants must:

- pay the rent on time
- look after the rental unit, keep it clean and not damage it
- not interfere with the landlord's rights or the rights of tenants in other units
- not break criminal laws in or around the rental unit (for example, cause damage or carry on illegal trade)
- follow the rules in their tenancy agreement (for example, regarding pets, waterbeds, the number of people who can stay with the tenant)
- give the required notice in writing if they are going to move out.

For more information, go to the Government of Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**). Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Topics, then Consumers and Property and click on Landlords and Tenants.

Where they exist, local Landlord and Tenant Advisory Boards provide information and help settle problems between landlords and tenants. They may charge a fee for information materials.

Property Insurance

Whether you buy a home or rent from someone else, you should purchase insurance to protect your property and personal possessions (belongings). If you buy a home, you need a homeowner insurance policy. If you rent, you need a tenant policy.

Homeowner and tenant insurance policies protect you from loss or damage to your personal possessions caused by events such as fire, theft, vandalism, wind or hailstorms. Your policy will list the perils (events) you are insured against. Flood damage to your home or contents usually is not included.

Postal worker delivering parcel

Insurance policies vary from one company to another. Some policies pay the depreciated value of damaged property (the price of a new item less a deduction based on the age and condition of the item at the time it was damaged or destroyed). Replacement cost policies pay whatever it costs to replace the damaged property with new items. All policies contain a deductible, usually at least $500, which means you can only claim for loss or damage over that amount. **Read your policy carefully** and ask your insurance agent or broker to explain anything you don't understand.

To get the best possible insurance coverage for the lowest possible price, contact an insurance broker or ask several insurance agents for quotes (look under Insurance Agents and Brokers in the yellow pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website).

For more information, see the Insurance Bureau of Canada website (**www.ibc.ca**), visit a local Insurance Bureau office or call the Consumer Information Centre at (780) 423-2212 in Edmonton or 1-800-377-6378 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta.

Phone, Internet and Mail Services

Making Telephone Calls

Almost every person or family and business in Alberta has a telephone.

Local calls are telephone calls made to a number in the same community. All Alberta phone numbers use one of two area codes. Towns and cities north of Red Deer use the area code (780) and towns and cities from Red Deer south use the area code (403). When you are making a local call, do not dial the area code. Use just seven digits (individual numbers).

If you are making a local call from a private telephone, there is no extra charge and you can talk as long as you want. However, if you make a local call from a hotel or motel room, an extra charge may be added to your accommodation bill. Ask at the reception desk to find out how much the charge will be.

Public pay telephones are located in small and large population centres (often in large buildings) and along roadways. To make a local call:

- pick up the receiver
- deposit 35 cents (or use a calling card or major credit card)
- dial a telephone number.

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You will hear a telephone ring or a busy signal. If the line is busy, hang up and your money will be returned. For assistance at no charge, call the operator by dialing 0.

Telephone books (sometimes called telephone directories) are divided into parts with pages of different colours. Numbers for emergency, health and social services usually are listed on the inside front cover or first page. Instructions for making long distance calls also are near the front of the book.

The directory also contains:

- the **white pages**, which list both family and business names in alphabetical order
- a separate section of **blue pages**, in larger cities, where government numbers are listed. In smaller cities and towns, look in the white pages under Government of Canada for federal government offices and Government of Alberta for provincial government offices. If an Alberta government office is not listed in your telephone book, you can reach the appropriate office toll-free through Service Alberta at 310-0000. Local government numbers are usually listed under City (or Town, Village) of name of the community. For example, local government offices in Lethbridge are listed under City of Lethbridge.

- **yellow pages** that are organized by type of business or service (for example, Banks, Day-care Centres, Dentists, Department Stores, Driving Instruction, Drug Addiction Information and Treatment, Electric Contractors).

If you do not have access to a telephone book and need to find a telephone number, you can use the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website or dial 411 for Directory Assistance. A small fee will be added to your telephone bill for each number or address provided when you use the 411 service.

Some people and businesses have answering machines that answer their telephones when they are not available. If a machine answers when you make a telephone call, you will hear a recorded message that usually asks you to state your name, telephone number and leave a message after you hear a beep.

Charges for long distance calls (called toll charges) vary depending on the company providing long distance services, the time of day, the destination of the call, the length of the call and the type of call (direct or operator-assisted). If you are calling long distance and are not sure which area code to use, you can dial 411 for Directory Assistance. However, a small fee will be added to your telephone bill when you use the 411 service.

Other features about the telephone system:

- You can call **direct** if you are calling from a private telephone and know the number and area code for the place you wish to call. Dial 1 then the area code and telephone number.
- To make an **operator-assisted** call, dial 0 followed by the area code and phone number. You may need the assistance of an operator if you are making a long distance call from a pay phone, want to charge the call to another phone number or want to call collect (ask the person receiving the call to pay for it).

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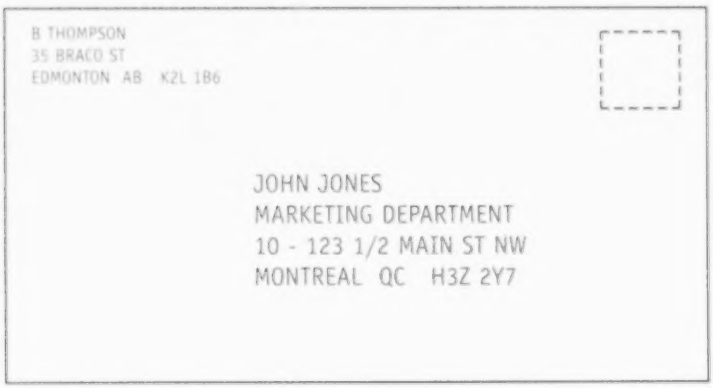


How to address an envelope

A number of companies offer long distance services in Alberta. Long distance telephone service providers often have discount offers for telephone calls made at certain times of the day or week. Some have discount rates for calls to particular areas of the world.
If you would like to prepay a specified number of minutes for long distance calls, you can buy long distance calling cards at various retail outlets instead of having long distance charges added to your telephone bill.

Making Calls to Government

To call a local Alberta government phone number, just dial the seven digits of the phone number. For example, if you are in Edmonton and are calling a government office in Edmonton, do not dial the area code number.

You can call an Alberta government office outside your community for free. Dial 310-0000; then after the prompt, dial the area code and the seven digit office number.

Accessing the Internet

Most Albertans own computers or have access to computers at work or at school. Telephone companies offer access to the Internet via telephone lines; cable television companies offer cable Internet services.

If you do not have access to the Internet at home or through a friend, you can access the Internet at a Community Access Program (CAP) centre in your community. In Alberta, most CAP centres are located in libraries, community centres or schools. To locate the CAP centre nearest you, call 1-800-575-9200 toll-free or talk to the reference librarian at your local public library.

Sending Mail

You can send mail via Canada Post or use the services of a private courier company.

Print the destination name and complete address on the front in the centre of the envelope or parcel. Print your return address in the top left corner and put stamps near the top right corner.

Stamps and postal services are available from Canada Post outlets in post offices, drug stores and small shops that display the Canada Post logo. Letters with correct postage can be dropped into Canada Post mailboxes on the street. Heavy letters or parcels should be taken to a postal outlet to determine the correct postage. If you are sending a parcel out of Canada, the postal clerk will ask you to describe the contents and dollar value of the parcel for customs purposes.

Canada Post charges extra for services such as the following:

- faster delivery than regular mail might deliver the envelope or parcel
- insuring valuable mail
- receiving proof that mail has been delivered.

For more information, see the Canada Post website (**www.canadapost.ca**) and courier company websites.

Transportation

Transportation in Cities

Street maps are available in stores that sell magazines and newspapers.

Walking

The following laws and suggestions about walking near vehicle traffic are provided for your safety:

- Use sidewalks, obey traffic signals and cross streets at intersections (where two or more streets meet). In Alberta, jaywalking (crossing the street other than at an intersection or marked crosswalk or against a red light) is against the law.
- If there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the road so you are facing traffic.
- Many street corners have crosswalks painted on the road. Drivers should stop at crosswalks to let pedestrians cross. However, pedestrians should be cautious and watch to make sure that cars have stopped before starting to cross the street.
- At night, wear light-coloured clothing to make it easier for drivers to see you.

Bicycles

Many adults and children ride bicycles during the summer months. They must obey traffic laws such as the following:

- Riders 17 years of age or younger must wear an approved bicycle helmet.
- Keep to the right or in the right lane, and ride in single file.
- Obey all traffic signs and lights.
- Use hand signals when turning.

RIGHT TURN

LEFT TURN

- Get off and walk your bicycle when using crosswalks or sidewalks.
- Only one person is allowed on a bicycle designed for one person.
- Bicycles ridden at night must have a bicycle light and reflector.

Public buses stop at regular bus stops.

Public Transportation Systems

- Transit buses pick up people and drop them off at bus stops only. Bus stops are marked with signs.
- Edmonton and Calgary also have Light Rail Transit (LRT) systems that connect some areas of the city with the downtown area.
- Most transit systems print maps that show where buses and LRT trains go. For information about bus and LRT routes, travel times and fares, visit the city's website or phone the transit system. Phone numbers are listed in the phone book in the blue pages or under the name of your community in the white pages.
- Have the correct amount of money (in coins) for bus fare because bus drivers do not carry change. In Edmonton and Calgary, you can purchase monthly bus passes or books of transit tickets at various retail outlets. Students often can purchase reduced fare bus passes through their schools.
- Read the signs posted in LRT stations and always pay the fare. Inspectors randomly check to see if passengers have proof that they have paid (a bus pass, date-stamped transit ticket or transfer slip). If you have not paid the appropriate fare, you will be fined.
- The cost of a bus ride does not vary with the length of the trip. If you need to take more than one bus or transfer to an LRT train to reach your destination, ask for a transfer slip when you pay your fare. A transfer slip allows you to get on the first available bus or train, at no additional charge, within 90 minutes of when you received the slip.
- Larger cities have special transit systems for people who have disabilities. These buses are specially designed to accommodate wheelchairs and take people from their homes to their destinations. Contact your local public transit system for information.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) trains in Edmonton and Calgary connect some areas of the city to the downtown area.

Taxis

- Taxis are more expensive than public transit but passengers are taken directly to their destination.
- All taxi companies in a city charge the same rate but rates may vary from one city to another.
- Each taxi has a meter to measure the time and distance of each trip. The meter will show how much to pay the driver. There is no bargaining for taxi fares. A tip of about 10 per cent may be expected but is not required.
- Taxis can be found waiting beside airports, large buildings, hotels, large department stores and hospitals. Or, taxis can be requested by phone. Telephone numbers for taxi companies are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone book and on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

Transportation Between Communities

Communities are often far apart, but Alberta has a well-maintained system of highways that makes motor vehicle travel fast and comfortable. For a small fee, highway maps are available at tourist information centres located along busy highways.

Buses, trains and planes offer other travel options:

- Buses travel between large and small cities throughout Alberta. For information about costs and schedules, look under Buses or Bus Lines in the yellow pages of your telephone book (or the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website) and call one or more companies for information.
- Passenger train service is limited to an interprovincial train route with stops in Jasper and Edmonton, and tour services from Vancouver to Jasper, Banff and Calgary. For information about schedules and costs, see the VIA Rail Canada website (**www.viarail.ca**) or call 1-888-842-7245 toll-free; or see the Rocky Mountaineer Railtours website (**www.rockymountaineer.com**) or call 1-877-460-3200 toll-free.
- Several airline companies offer regularly scheduled flights between Calgary and Edmonton. Regional airline companies also fly to other cities in the province. For free information about schedules and costs, contact a travel agent (look under Travel in the yellow pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website).
- Hitchhiking (standing on a roadside indicating you want someone to give you a ride) is dangerous and may be against the law in some provinces.

Driver's Licences

Provincial governments in Canada issue driver's licences. If you have an international driver's licence or a driver's licence issued in another province of Canada, contact an Alberta Registry Agent to find out when and how to obtain an Alberta driver's licence. Unless you are a full-time student, you probably will be required to obtain an Alberta driver's licence if you have been in Alberta for more than 90 days in 12 consecutive months. Moving from one province to another requires getting a new driver's licence and registering your vehicle in your new province or territory.

Every driver of a car, truck or motorcycle must have a valid driver's licence. You must have the licence with you when you are driving a motor vehicle (driving without it could result in a fine). Car owners also must register the vehicle and purchase car insurance before operating the vehicle in Alberta. Insurance documents must be kept in the car. Driving without them could result in a fine.

Every driver of a vehicle must have a valid driver's (or operator's) licence.

Alberta has a graduated driver licensing system:

1. To obtain a learner's (Class 7) licence, new drivers must be at least 14 years of age, pass a vision test and pass a written test on the rules of the road. Learners are limited to driving under certain conditions. For example, they cannot drive between midnight and 5 a.m. At other times of the day, they can drive only when accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 18 years of age and seated next to the driver.
2. Learners can apply for a probationary licence after they have held a learner's licence for at least one year. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and pass a standard Alberta road test (a test of driving skills). Probationary drivers are limited to driving under certain conditions. For example, they cannot serve as an accompanying driver for a learner. Probationary drivers can apply for an operator's (Class 5) licence after they have held a probationary licence for at least two years and pass an advanced road test. They must not have had their licence suspended in the last year (for information about suspensions, see Traffic Tickets and Drinking and Driving in this chapter).

When you apply for a driver's licence, you will be asked to show proof of your identity and proof that you are a resident of Alberta. Those under the age of 18 must have their application signed by a parent or guardian.

By law, anyone who has a disease or disability that could affect their ability to drive safely must report the problem when they apply for a driver licence. If you are 75 years of age or older, you must submit a medical report.

Privately operated driving schools teach people to drive. Some driving schools offer lessons in other languages as well as English. For a list of driving schools in your area, look under Driving Instruction in the yellow pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

To apply for a driver's licence or to obtain information about driving safety and driving laws, go to an Alberta Registry Agent. To find the closest Alberta Registry Agent, use the search feature in the Alberta Registry Agents section of the Alberta Government Services website (**www.gov.ab.ca/gs**). Or, look under License and Registry Services in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

Traffic Tickets

Police give a summons (traffic ticket) to drivers for breaking traffic laws (for example, driving faster than the speed limit or failing to come to a full stop at a stop sign). The ticket specifies a fine. By paying the fine, you admit that you broke the law. If you believe you did not break the law, you can go to court. If you are found guilty, you will have to pay the fine and will receive between two and seven demerit points (marks given against an offender) against your licence.

If you accumulate 15 or more demerit points, your driver's licence will be suspended for one month. During this month, you are not allowed to drive. Before you can begin driving again, you will have to agree to meet special conditions.

Drinking and Driving

Canada has strict laws about drinking alcohol and driving a motor vehicle. It is against the law:

- to drive a vehicle if your ability to drive is impaired by alcohol or drugs
- to refuse to give a proper sample of your breath or blood if requested by a police officer
- to have a level of alcohol in your blood of more than 0.08 per cent while driving a vehicle.

Drivers who break any of these rules automatically have their driver's licence suspended for one month.

It also is against the law to have an open bottle of alcohol in a vehicle. Even unopened containers of alcohol must be out of reach of the driver and passengers (for example, in the trunk of a car).

If you break these laws, you may face one **or more** of the following consequences:

- temporary or permanent loss of your driver's licence
- a large fine
- increased costs for insurance coverage
- mandatory participation in special classes for impaired drivers
- a jail term.

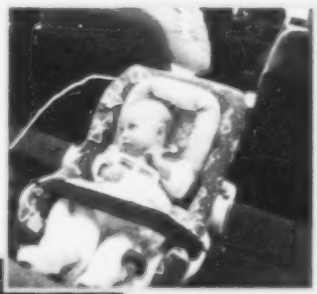
Police check stops are set up to check for drivers who have been drinking alcohol. It is against the law to drive a vehicle if you are impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Collisions

If a vehicle you are driving is involved in a collision (accident), you are required by law to show the other driver your name, address, driver's licence number, registration and insurance documents. You should get the same information from the other driver and write it down. Also, ask anyone who witnessed the collision for his or her name, address and telephone number. Other points to keep in mind:

- If you think the damage will cost more than a thousand dollars to repair, notify the police. You also should contact your insurance company.
- If someone has been injured, call an ambulance and the police immediately. You are required by law to stay at the collision site until the police arrive.

Language problems are not an acceptable excuse for failing to follow these rules or failing to follow police instructions. If you have a problem communicating, ask a police officer to provide an interpreter.



Seat Belts

By law in Alberta, all drivers and passengers in motor vehicles must fasten their seat belts. Failure to wear a seat belt can result in a fine.

Children under six years of age who weigh less than 18 kg (kilograms) must be secured in an approved and properly installed child safety seat.

Buying or Leasing a Motor Vehicle

New cars and trucks can be purchased or leased only from automobile dealers. Leases are contracts in which you agree to make a number of payments over the term of the lease and return the vehicle to the company when the lease is over. Leasing often is a convenient way to get a vehicle but it may not be the cheapest way. For information about leasing vehicles and comparing costs, see Reality Choices in the

Consumer Information section of the Alberta Government Services website (**www.gov.ab.ca/gs**).

New car prices vary and some bargaining is generally expected. New cars come with a warranty. A warranty is a document, which says that for a period of a year or more, certain parts of the car will be repaired without cost to the owner, if the specified parts stop operating properly.

Used vehicles may be purchased from a used car dealer or a vehicle owner. Most used cars do not come with a warranty, although it is a good idea to ask if there is one.

For information about buying a vehicle, see the Everything Automotive section of the Alberta Motor Association website (**www.ama.ab.ca**).

Vehicle Insurance

If you purchase or lease a vehicle, you also must purchase auto insurance that covers bodily injury, death and property damage in the event of an accident. Driving without insurance may result in a fine.

Vehicle insurance premiums and coverage vary from one company to another, so it is a good idea to get estimates from several companies. Some insurance companies give discounts to people who have taken a driver training course from a driving school. Some companies will charge higher insurance rates for people who do not provide a driver's record or abstract from the last country of residence where they had a driver's licence.

To find local insurance agents and brokers, look under Insurance Agents and Brokers in the yellow pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

For general information about auto insurance, see the Insurance Bureau of Canada website (**www.ibc.ca**), visit a local Insurance Bureau office or call the Consumer Information Centre at (780) 423-2212 in Edmonton or 1-800-377-6378 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta.

Registering a Vehicle

Motor vehicles owned by residents of Alberta must be registered by an Alberta Registry Agent. Driving a vehicle that has not been registered could result in a fine.

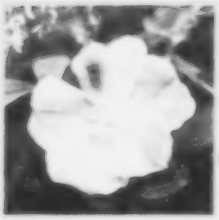
To register your vehicle, you must:

- be a resident of Alberta
- have a bill of sale (a document signed by the seller that states the price, the make and model of car, the vehicle identification serial number and the seller's full name).
- show proof that you have purchased vehicle insurance.

Used vehicles that have not been registered in Alberta before must pass a vehicle inspection performed by a mechanic who holds a valid, current journeyman certificate.

After submitting a completed application form and paying a registration fee, you will be given a registration card and licence plates. Keep your registration card with your insurance card in your vehicle. A police officer can give anyone driving your vehicle a fine if they do not have licence plates on the car or insurance and registration documents in the car.

Welcome to Alberta: A Guidebook for Immigrants © Government of Alberta, Human Resources and Employment



Winter Driving and Vehicle Care

Driving in winter conditions (snow and cold temperatures) requires preparation, such as:

- **Learn how to drive safely in winter driving conditions.** Drive more slowly. Icy roads are slippery, so it takes much longer to stop than it does on dry pavement. Sudden stops and turns, hard braking and rapid acceleration are dangerous because you might go into a skid (lose control because the vehicle starts to slide). For tips about winter driving, see the Alberta Traffic Safety Initiative website (**www.saferoads.com**).
- **Take a winter driving course.** The best way to learn how to drive safely in winter driving conditions is to take a winter driving course from a driving school. For a list of driving schools in your area, look under Driving Instruction in the yellow pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.
- **Winterize your vehicle.** Cold weather can make existing mechanical problems worse, so make sure your vehicle is running properly. The fluid in the windshield washer reservoir and anti-freeze in the cooling system should be designed for use in cold temperatures. Tires should be in good condition and have all-season or winter treads. When temperatures go below -20°C, plug in the block heater two or three hours before you plan to start the vehicle. Block heaters warm up the engine compartment so the engine will start properly.
- **Keep warm clothing and emergency supplies in your vehicle.** If you get stuck in snow, you may have to wait for help to arrive. Attract attention by raising the hood, tying a flag to the top of the antenna and using flares or other emergency signals, if necessary. In a snowstorm, regularly clear snow away from your tail pipe and move everything you might need from the trunk into the car. If help is not very close, stay in your vehicle and keep as warm as possible until help arrives.

Social Customs

Keep in mind that social customs change over time and depend on the situation. Following is a list of some Canadian customs that may not be familiar to you:

- When you are introduced to someone, it is customary to say, "Hello, how are you?" Some people will put out their right hand, expecting you to shake it with your right hand. Some Canadians consider it impolite to refuse to shake hands.
- When you are talking to someone, stand 60 to 100 cm away. Many Canadians feel uncomfortable if someone they do not know very well touches them or stands closer than 60 cm away.
- Be on time for appointments. If you have an appointment (for example, to see a doctor, teacher, friend), try to be there at the agreed time. If you will be late or unable to keep an appointment, telephone ahead of time and let the person know.
- Smoking is not permitted in public places (for example, stores, theatres, office buildings and many restaurants) except in specified areas. Look for signs indicating where smoking is acceptable.
- It is generally acceptable for young children and parents or a man and woman to hold hands or walk arm in arm in public. However, some other

physical displays of affection are not as acceptable. It is not common for two men or two women to hold hands.

- It is unacceptable in most circumstances to be loud, aggressive or violent. This includes carrying on a loud conversation in a public place, calling people names and spanking a child in a store. Hitting or threatening another person is against the law. For more information about laws, see the Rights and Responsibilities and Canadian Citizenship section in the Laws and Legal System chapter.
- Unless you know a person very well, it is considered impolite to ask certain types of personal questions. For example, it is generally not acceptable to ask the following:
  - How much money do you make?
  - How much did you pay for your house or car?
  - Why aren't you married?
  - How old are you?
  - How much do you weigh?
  - Why don't you have any children?
- Most Albertans do not approve of littering (discarding garbage on the floor or ground in a public place). Some communities have bylaws where a person can be fined for littering. Garbage cans are generally available in public places such as shopping malls and parks.

In Canada, people feel comfortable when they stand at least 60 to 100 cm apart.

Child Care

In Canada, parents are legally responsible for their children up to the age of 18. Both parents are responsible for caring for their children.

Children six to 16 years of age must attend school. Those under 12 years of age usually do not work outside the home. A permit may be issued to allow a child to work if there is an acceptable reason for employing a child and the job is safe and appropriate for the child.

Young children should not be left at home alone. If both parents work outside the home, they must choose a child care option that will meet their needs and the needs of their children. Child care options range from informal care by relatives, babysitters or nannies (in their home or the child's home) to more formal arrangements. Formal child care options include licensed day-care centres, approved family day homes and out-of-school care centres that are required to meet government standards and are inspected regularly. There are several kinds of child care facilities:

- **Day-care centres** and approved family day homes provide care and learning through play activities for children under the age of six.
- **Licensed out-of-school care centres** care for children six to 12 years of age. They also may care for children who are at least 4 1/2 years of age and enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program.
- **Drop-in centres** provide child care services for parents who need occasional care for their children.
- **Nursery schools** provide programs for pre-school children.

Day-care centres and out-of-school centres may be located in community centres, shopping malls, schools, office buildings or churches. Family day homes are located in private residences.

Day-care centres, out-of-school centres and family day homes usually are open Monday to Friday from early in the morning until 6 or 7 p.m. Some are open during evening and weekend hours. Out-of-school care centres typically operate before and after school hours and offer full-day care on non-school days.

In winter, parents are expected to provide appropriate clothing so children can play outdoors. Children should be warned that anything wet (including skin) would freeze to metal in cold temperatures.

Child care subsidies are available for childcare in licensed day-care centres and approved family day homes. Subsidies also are available for children who are at least 4 1/2 years of age, are enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program and require childcare for part of the day. Subsidy amounts depend on family income, reason for child care and size of family. Subsidies are not available through private babysitters except for the Kin Child Care Funding program, which may be offered where other child care options are limited.

If your child has a special need (for example, your child needs ongoing medical care or has a disability or developmental delay), Alberta Children's Services provides assistance in finding suitable childcare.

For more information, see the Alberta Children's Services website (**www.child.gov.ab.ca**) or contact the Child and Family Services Authority in your area (dial 310-0000 and an operator will connect you). Or, call day-care centres, out-of-school care centres and approved family day homes listed under Day-Care Centres in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

Recreation and Sports

Parks

Alberta has a number of community and provincial parks and two very well known national parks (Jasper and Banff). You can enjoy a variety of scenery from the forests and rivers of the mountain parks to the desert-like badlands, found east of Calgary. Depending upon the kind of park, visitors can ski, climb, bike, canoe, hike, fish, camp and enjoy the wildlife animals.

Parks are areas where wildlife animals, land and water are protected by law. Activities that would destroy these natural regions are not allowed. Because parks are protected areas, there are a number of rules for using them.

It is against the law to consume alcohol in public places such as community parks.

In national parks, a small fee for visiting the park is collected when you enter the park. For more information about national parks, see the Parks Canada website (**www.parkscanada.pch.gc.ca**).

For information about provincial parks, see the Enjoying Alberta/Parks and Protected Areas section of the Alberta Community Development website (**www.cd.gov.ab.ca**).

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Sports

Students are encouraged to participate in sports at school, and everyone is encouraged to join teams and use community recreation centres such as swimming pools and ice arenas. If you cannot afford the equipment or fees required for a child's favourite sporting or recreation activity, contact the organization offering the activity and ask about equipment and fee assistance (subsidy) programs. You may be able to get used equipment that is still in good condition or qualify for lower fees.

There are over one hundred provincial sport and recreation associations in Alberta. For more information, see the Programs and Services section of the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation website (**www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpwf**). Or, look under the name or your community (for example, City of Grande Prairie) in the white pages or blue pages of your telephone book or on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

Community Centres

People go to community centres in their neighbourhoods to participate in social, fundraising or sports events, or take recreational learning classes (for example, to learn how to sew, dance or speak English). Ethnocultural and religious organizations also provide places for their members to gather and participate in social, learning or religious activities.

Recreational Learning

Schools and community leagues often provide evening classes for people interested in learning about a wide variety of subjects (for example, baking, dancing, painting, pottery, chess, how to stop smoking or drinking alcohol, gymnastics and many other sports). For more information, contact the Community Adult Learning Council, public school board, separate school board, community leagues or ethnocultural organizations in your area. Community Adult Learning Councils are listed in the Community-Based Adult Learning section of the Alberta Advanced Education website (**www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca**).

Cultural Activities

Alberta has many opportunities for people to enjoy cultural activities such as going to museums, ballets, zoos, symphonies, theatres, art galleries, historical sites, libraries, operas and entertainment based on interests of ethnic groups. Throughout the summer months, there are rodeos, fairs, farmers' markets, outdoor and indoor concerts as well as numerous celebrations and festivals such as the Calgary Stampede and Edmonton's Heritage Days. These events are advertised in newspapers and on radio and television. For more information, see the Enjoying Alberta section of the Alberta Community Development website (**www.cd.gov.ab.ca**).

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MONEY and Banking

Ways to Pay for Purchases

Most businesses in Canada accept money, debit cards or credit cards to pay for items. Cash (paper money and coins) is used most often for small purchases. Debit cards and credit cards are usually used for more expensive purchases. Businesses may or may not accept personal cheques as payment for goods.

Cash

Canadian currency consists of dollars ($) and cents (¢). There are 100 cents in one dollar. The coins available in Canadian currency are:

penny (1¢)	quarter (25¢)
nickel (5¢)	loonie ($1)
dime (10¢)	toonie ($2)

Bills (paper money) are in the following common denominations: $5, $10, $20, $50 and $100.

Debit Cards

Debit cards are sometimes called bank cards or client cards. Debit cards are obtained from your financial institution (bank, credit union or Alberta Treasury Branch). They are small plastic cards that allow you to use automated banking machines (ABMs, also referred to as ATMs) to withdraw money from your account. At ABMs operated by your financial institution, you also may be able to deposit money and conduct other account transactions (for example, pay utility bills). Frequently, there is a small service fee for using ABMs, with the fee taken from your account.

Where merchants accept direct debit payments, you also can use a debit card to make purchases. The cost of your purchase is withdrawn from your account and credited to the merchant's account.

With a debit or client card, you can pay bills, deposit money and withdraw money directly from your account.

With a credit card, you can buy items now which you pay for at a later date.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are small plastic cards that allow you to buy items which you would pay for later. Anyone can apply for a credit card free of charge. Financial institutions and merchants usually accept credit card applications from people who have a good credit rating (record of repaying borrowed funds).

Credit cards are convenient and may sometimes serve as identification, but they can cause problems if you buy more things than you can afford. You must pay interest on any amount not paid by the due date specified on the credit card statement. The interest charged on unpaid credit card debt usually is much higher than interest rates for other types of loans. Some credit cards offer lower interest rates than others, so it is important to read the interest rate information before using a credit card.

For your convenience, you can use your debit card in an automated banking machine (ABM).

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Cheques

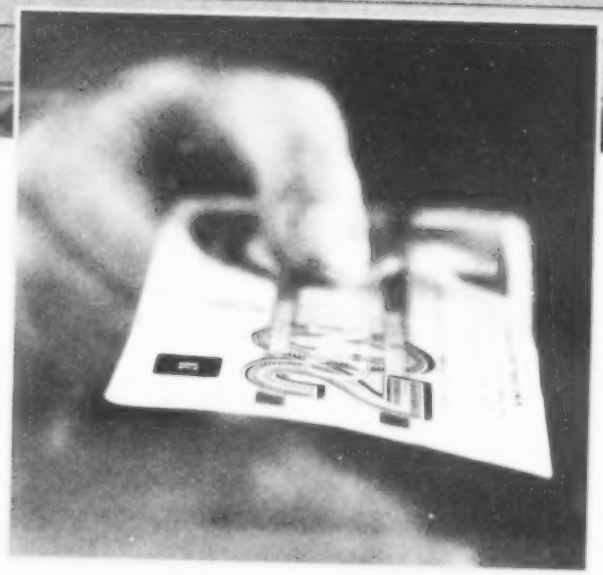
A personal cheque is a piece of paper that instructs a financial institution (bank, credit union or Alberta Treasury Branch) to take the amount of money it says on the cheque out of your account and pay that amount to the person or organization you name on the cheque.

When you open an account at a financial institution, you will receive a book of blank cheques and a cheque register. To write a cheque, write the date, the name of the person or organization you are paying, the amount of money in numbers and words and your signature in the blanks provided.

There are three very important things to remember when writing cheques:

1. Record each cheque in the cheque register. This will help you keep track of how much money you have left in the account.
2. There must be enough money in your account to cover the total amount of all the cheques you write. If there is not, your financial institution will charge an NSF (not sufficient funds) fee. It is illegal to intentionally write a cheque for more money than you have in an account: you could be charged with fraud.
3. Never sign a blank cheque without filling in the name of the person or organization you are paying and the amount. A blank, signed cheque could be used to steal money from your account. Never write a cheque payable to "Cash" unless you are at a financial institution because it could be cashed by anyone.

If you use a cheque to pay for a purchase, you probably will be asked to show two pieces of identification (for example, a credit card, driver's licence or other document with your picture and signature).



Financial Institutions

Cash can be lost, stolen or destroyed. In Alberta, money can be kept safely in a financial institution such as a bank, credit union or Alberta Treasury Branch.

Financial institutions offer services such as the following:

- currency exchange
- chequing, saving and other types of accounts
- money orders and traveller's cheques
- safety deposit boxes
- utility, telephone and credit card bill payment services by phone or the Internet
- debit cards and credit cards
- loans.

Financial institutions pay you interest on the amount of money you deposit and keep there. The amount of interest and the way interest is calculated depends on the type of account.

If you borrow money from a financial institution, you will be charged interest. Read loan documents very carefully to make sure you understand when you must repay the money and how much you will be required to pay in interest.

Interest rates and service charges vary from one institution to another. For information about services and charges, visit or call the financial institutions nearest you or check their websites.

Reference for Alberta's Entrepreneurs of Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Types of Accounts

Most banks, credit unions and Alberta Treasury Branches offer three basic types of accounts: chequing, saving and a combination of chequing and saving. Talk to service representatives at several financial institutions about the types of accounts they offer. Then you can compare service charges and interest rates and decide where you will get the best deal for the types of services you want.

You may wish to apply for a debit card when you open an account. When you receive a debit card, you also will get a PIN (personal identification number). You need both your debit card and PIN to use an automated banking machine (ABM, also referred to as an ATM) or make a direct debit payment. Choose a PIN that is not easy for someone else to guess (for example, do not use your address) and do not write the number on your card or give it to anyone else. If you do, anyone who has your card and PIN can take money out of your account without your knowledge. If you lose your card, immediately report the loss to the financial institution that issued the card.

For general information about banking services and consumer tips, see the Canadian Bankers Association website (**www.cba.ca**).

Identity Theft

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information to commit fraud. For example, identity thieves may order merchandise in your name, steal money from your bank account, apply for and use a credit card in your name or use your name to evade the police.

You can reduce the risk of becoming a victim of identity theft by following these guidelines:

- Do not reveal your bank account PIN to anyone. For example, stand in a way that makes it difficult for others to see the numbers you enter when you use an automated banking machine (ABM) or pay by direct debit.
- Do not give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you contacted the other person first and know with whom you are dealing.
- Ask how the information will be used or shared before you reveal personal information.
- Do not use passwords that are easy to guess (for example, your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your phone number) for accounts you access by phone or the Internet.
- Remove mail from your mailbox promptly, have Canada Post forward your mail if you change your mailing address and deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes.
- Pay attention to when bills usually arrive each month and follow up if bills do not arrive on time.
- Keep items with personal information (for example, bills, income tax forms, receipts) in a safe place and shred them when you don't need them any more.
- Tear up or shred any unwanted credit applications you receive in the mail.
- Carry a minimum number of identification and credit cards with you.

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- Keep your SIN (Social Insurance Number) card in a secure place. Provide your SIN only when necessary (for example, on in come tax forms or when you start a new job). See the SIN section in the Employment chapter for more information.

For more information, see the information about identity theft in the Consumer Information and Alerts section of the Alberta Government Services website (**www.gov.ab.ca/gs**).

Paycheques

By law, employers must pay employees at least once every month. Most employers pay workers by cheque or direct deposit every two weeks or twice a month.

You can exchange a paycheque for cash at a bank or financial institution where you have an account. If you arrange for direct deposit, your pay is electronically deposited in your bank account on regular paydays.

The *Alberta Employment Standards Code* allows the following deductions to be made from employee earnings:

- income tax payments
- Canada Pension Plan contribution
- Employment Insurance contribution
- Alberta Health Care Insurance premiums.

Your employer must have your written permission to make deductions for contributions to employee pension plans, company dental plan or parking. Usually, employers provide information about these deductions and obtain your permission before you start work.

There is more information available on additional deductions and other *Employment Standards Code* requirements by visiting the department's employment standards website (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards**) or calling their help line at (780) 427-3731 in Edmonton or toll-free from elsewhere in the province by dialing 310-0000 and entering (780) 427-3731.

More information about payment for work and employment standards is available in the publication *A Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in Alberta Workplaces* produced by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. To order your free copy, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta. You can also download or order a copy on-line from the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**).

Shopping

Canada has converted from the imperial to the metric system of measurement. Prices of goods sold by weight or volume (for example, meat, vegetables, gasoline) may be shown in metric units, or both metric and imperial units.

	Metric	Imperial
Length	1 metre	= 1.1 yards
Weight	1 kilogram	= 2.2 pounds
Volume	1 litre	= 0.88 quarts or 0.22 gallons

Most stores and shops in Alberta have fixed prices and do not allow bargaining.

When you are shopping in a mall, be sure to pay for anything you pick up in a store before you go back into the mall or you may be accused of shoplifting (theft). Store owners install cameras and employ people to catch customers who take items without paying for them. Shoplifting is a criminal offence in Canada and can have very serious consequences (for more information, see The Canadian Legal System section).

Refunds and Exchanges

If you pay for something, then decide you do not want to keep it, stores are not required to refund your money. Store refund policies are usually posted near the cash register. If you have a cash register receipt for the purchase and return the item within a certain period of time, the store may give your money back, allow you to exchange the item for something else or

give you credit toward a future purchase. Stores will not accept returned underwear or bathing suits or items of clothing that have been worn or damaged.

For more information, see the Alberta Government Services website (**www.gov.ab.ca/gs**). In the Consumer Information and Alerts section, select Reality Choices and go to the topic Shopping for Satisfaction.

Spending Money Wisely

There are many ways to save money on necessary purchases:

- Buying basic food supplies such as meat, flour, sugar, etc. and preparing your own meals is usually less expensive than buying prepared foods.
- Stores often have sales that are advertised in newspapers and on television. Sale prices may be reduced up to 50 per cent.
- Second-hand stores sell all kinds of used items in good condition at greatly reduced prices. These stores sometimes allow bargaining but may accept payment only in cash.
- Auction houses sell used items at advertised auction sales. You can usually inspect items before an auction sale begins. At the sale, items are sold to the person who offers the highest price. To avoid bidding more than you can afford to pay, it is a good idea to decide what your maximum offer for an item will be before the bidding begins.
- Homeowners sometimes have garage sales or yard sales to sell items they no longer want. Watch for garage sale notices in newspapers and near traffic intersections in your neighbourhood. Some bargaining may be expected.

For more information, see the Consumer Information and Alerts section of the Alberta Government Services website (**www.gov.ab.ca/gs**). Select Reality Choices and go to the You and Your Money section. Other suggestions and assistance can be found in *Stretch your Dollars: Budgeting basics*, published by Credit Counselling Services of Alberta. To order your free copy, go to the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**) or call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free elsewhere in Alberta.

Taxes

Governments collect taxes to get the money needed to govern and provide services such as health care, education and highways. Federal and provincial governments collect income taxes and sales taxes. Cities and towns collect property taxes.

Income Tax

The amount of income tax you must pay depends on your taxable income. All of your sources of income must be reported on your tax form.

Self-employed people and those who own businesses must make arrangements to pay income tax directly to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). People who work for others must allow income tax to be deducted from their pay. Employers mail T4s, *Statement of Remuneration* forms, to employees each year at the end of February. T4s include information about your employment income for the year and amounts deducted for income tax, Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance.

Generally, you must submit a completed personal income tax return (form) for each calendar year by April 30 of the following year. Filing due dates may be different for people who are self-employed. In February, March and April, immigrant-serving agencies and other organizations may offer free information sessions on how to complete tax returns. The CRA co-ordinates volunteer programs that complete income tax returns for people who meet certain criteria.

At the end of each year, the CRA mails tax packages to people who have paid income taxes before. A tax package includes a general guide and forms book, an

income tax return and schedules. If you have never paid income taxes as a resident of Canada, you can get a tax package in any of the following ways:

- download forms and schedules from the CRA website (**www.cra.gc.ca/forms**)
- pick up a tax package at any Canada Post outlet from February to May.
- call the CRA toll-free number 1-800-959-2221 between 8:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. local time.

After completing an income tax return, you may find that you either owe money to the government or you are entitled to a refund.

For more information, see the CRA website (**www.cra.gc.ca**) or call the CRA toll-free number listed above. Other tax information sources are as follows:

- The pamphlet T4055, *Newcomers to Canada*, and the fact sheet T4133, *Are you a newcomer to Canada?* provide information about the Canadian tax system and how to complete your first income tax return.
- The on-line course Learning About Taxes (**www.cra.gc.ca/tax/individuals**) also provides information about the Canadian tax system and how to file a basic income tax return.
- Addresses and telephone numbers for tax services offices are listed in the government section of your telephone book and on the Contact Us page of the CRA website (**www.cra.gc.ca**).

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The federal government also gets money from a seven per cent sales tax called the Goods and Services Tax (GST). GST is added to the price of every purchase except for basic groceries, rent, used goods and some services (for example, many health care and education services). Basic groceries are foods you have to take home to prepare before eating. GST must be added to the price of other types of food.

If your income is low, you may be entitled to receive the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) credit. To receive this credit as soon as possible, complete form RC151, *GST/HST Credit Application for Individuals Who Become Residents of Canada*. To continue receiving the credit, you (and your spouse or common-law partner) must file an income tax return for each year you are residents of Canada.

For more information about the GST/HST credit, see the Canada Revenue Agency website (**www.cra.gc.ca**) or call 1-800-959-1953 toll-free. To get forms, see the website or call 1-800-959-2221 toll-free.

Canada Child Tax Benefit

If you have children who are under 18 years of age, you may be eligible for the Canada Child Tax Benefit. It provides tax-free monthly payments to help with the cost of raising children. The amount of money you may receive is based on the total of your net income plus your spouse's net income, and the number of children you have under age 18. You can apply for this credit by completing Form RC66, Canada Child *Tax Benefit Application* and submitting it to the Canada Revenue Agency with all the required documents. You also may need to submit a completed RC66 Schedule, *Status in Canada/Statement of Income*.

Pamphlet T4114, *Your Canada Child Tax Benefit* provides more information. For a copy of this pamphlet or to order forms, see the Canada Revenue Agency website (**www.cra.gc.ca**) or call 1-800-959-2221 toll-free.

Property Tax

If you own a home, buildings or land, you will have to pay property taxes to the local (city, town or county) government. The amount depends on the value of your property and where you live. Property tax assessments are mailed to property owners once a year. Renters do not have to pay property taxes.

EMPLOYMENT

Canadian society places great value on employment (work). Men, women and even older children have full-time or part-time jobs or own businesses where they work.

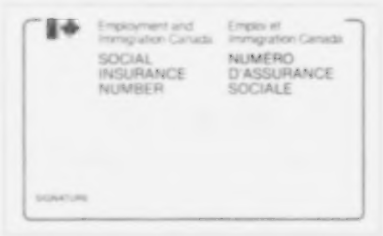
Social Insurance Number

A Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a nine-digit number used to administer Canadian government programs. You will require a SIN to work in Canada or receive government benefits.

To get a Social Insurance Number, go to a Canada-Alberta Service Centre (CASC—a centre operated through the co-operation of the governments of Alberta and Canada) or Human Resource Centre of Canada (HRCC—a centre operated by only the Government of Canada) and apply in writing. You will need two primary pieces of identification (for example, a birth certificate and an Alberta Health Care Insurance Card).

To find the address of the CASC or HRCC office nearest you can:

- call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free throughout Alberta
- go to the Government of Alberta website (**www.gov.ab.ca**). Under the Service Alberta heading, choose Topics, then Education and Employment
- see the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website (**www.hrsdc.gc.ca**)
- call 1-800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232) toll-free
- look under Government of Alberta or Government of Canada in the white or blue pages of the telephone book.



If your Social Insurance Number card is lost or stolen, request a new one at the nearest CASC or HRCC office. There is a small fee for a replacement card.

Finding Work

Finding work in Alberta's competitive marketplace takes time, determination, energy, confidence, knowledge and skills. You need to know:

- what types of work you are qualified to perform in Alberta
- where to look for suitable work opportunities
- how to present your qualifications to employers.

There are many resources and services available to help people find work:

- Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres are located throughout Alberta. These centres and Canada-Alberta Service Centres, offer listings of job openings, provide information materials about career planning and how to find work and offer seminars and workshops on these topics. Some centres also provide Internet access so you can search electronically for work postings. Both Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres and Canada-Alberta Service Centres are listed in the white or blue pages of the telephone directory under Government of Alberta. You can also find the centre nearest you by calling the Alberta Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753 toll-free throughout Alberta or (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton.
- Alberta Human Resources and Employment offers a free publication called *Working in Alberta: A Guide for Internationally Trained and Educated Immigrants*. It can be obtained by contacting any of the offices mentioned above.
- The ALIS (Alberta Learning Information Service) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca**) provides a great deal of information about career planning, employment and learning.
- Public libraries have information about how to find work as well as information about local employers.

- Immigrant-serving agencies often have staff members who can speak several languages and have experience helping people look for work.

Working in Alberta: A guide for internationally trained and educated immigrants

Do you want to look for work related to your occupation of training? Do you know how to present your international work experience to Alberta employers? Working in Alberta has information and tools to help you research job opportunities in your occupation in Alberta, look at other employment alternatives and become familiar with the Alberta workplace. For your free copy of this publication, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free in other Alberta locations or order on-line at **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**.

There are several agencies in the province that offer assistance to immigrants in their job search efforts:

Edmonton

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
101, 10010-107A Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 4H8
Telephone: (780) 424-7709
Fax: (780) 424-7736
E-mail: mcnedm@emcn.ab.ca
Website: **www.emcn.ab.ca**

Bredin Institute
9707-110 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 2L9
Telephone: (780) 425-3730
Fax: (780) 426-3709
E-mail: bredin@bredin.ab.ca
Website: **www.bredin.ab.ca**

Calgary

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
3rd Floor, 120-17 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2S 2T2
Telephone: (403) 262-2006
Fax: (403) 262-2033
E-mail: contact@ccis-calgary.ab.ca
Website: **www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca**

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
#200, 138-4th Avenue SE
Calgary, AB T2G 4Z6
Telephone: (403) 263-4414
Fax: (403) 264-3914
E-mail: general@ciwa-online.com
Website: **www.ciwa-online.com**

Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
#125, 920-36th Street NE
Calgary, AB T2A 6L8
Telephone: (403) 569-3325
Fax: (403) 248-5041
E-mail: newcomer@cmcn.ab.ca
Website: **www.cmcn.ab.ca**

Red Deer

Catholic Social Services: Immigration and Settlement
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue
Red Deer, AB T4N 6C2
Telephone: (403) 346-8818
Fax: (403) 347-5220
Website: **www.intentr.com/immigrantctr**

Most of these services are offered free of charge. To take full advantage of them, you need to understand the work search process. There are four steps in this process:

1. Identify the skills you have and the skills you may need to develop.
   - Employers look for personal and transferable skills such as attitude, ability to get along well with other workers, dependability, problem-solving skills and organizational skills, as well as the technical skills required for specific types of work.
   - If you have professional or trade qualifications, find out if your credentials are recognized in Alberta (for more information, see the Evaluating Your Work Options section in this chapter).
   - If you do not speak English fluently, arrange to take an English as a Second Language (ESL) class (for more information, see the English as a Second Language section in the Education chapter).
2. Identify employers who may need someone who has skills like yours. Not all, or even most, job openings are advertised or listed at Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres.
   - As you go about your daily living, talk to people about the kind of work you want to find. For example, discuss your work search with counsellors at immigrant-serving agencies or people in your English as a Second Language class, as well as your relatives, friends and neighbours. If they do not know where you might find suitable work opportunities, ask them to refer you to others who might know.
   - Read about Alberta's industries and fields of employment at a local library or Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre or on the ALIS website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca**).
   - Look in the Classified and Careers sections of local newspapers for job advertisements.
   - Use the yellow pages of the telephone directory (in print or on the Internet at **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm**) to find potential employers in your field.
3. Gather the information you will need to apply for work. Employers will expect you to fill in an application form or give them a prepared résumé. A résumé is a short, typed summary of your qualifications and work experience.
4. Present your qualifications to employers. When you respond to a job advertisement, follow the instructions in the ad. Employers usually ask only the most qualified applicants for an interview. During the interview, applicants are expected to provide more information about how their qualifications and experience relate to job requirements.

For more information about completing application forms, preparing résumés and making a good impression in an interview:

- Call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 (outside of Edmonton, call 1-800-661-3753 toll-free).
- Read the employment-related information on the ALIS (Alberta Learning Information Service) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca**).
- Talk to a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency or Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre.

Evaluating Your Work Options

Many newly arrived immigrants to Alberta find it challenging to obtain employment directly related to their training or work experience. For a while, it may be necessary for you to be flexible about the kind of work you are willing to do. Accepting a transitional job (one taken primarily for income while you are looking for other opportunities) provides a chance to gain Canadian work experience, develop fluency in English and upgrade other qualifications.

Qualifications from other countries may be recognized in Alberta. If you have professional or trade qualifications, contact the appropriate provincial organization. In some occupations, you must be registered with a professional regulatory organization or the provincial government before you can work in your occupation.

It should be noted that not all professions or trades have associations that register or oversee the work of people employed in their business. To find out if your profession or trade has a regulatory organization in Alberta, go to the CERTinfo (Certification and Registration Requirements for Employment in Alberta) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/certinfo**). Those organizations can sometimes provide advice or other kinds of assistance in finding work for which you have training or experience outside of the province.

However, in cases where there is no work-related association or organization to assist you, one of the immigrant-serving agencies in your local area may be able to offer advice. Another possibility is to seek the names of companies in your field of work from the yellow pages of the telephone book and contact those companies directly.

To obtain employment in your profession or trade you may have to improve your qualifications.

Improving Your Qualifications

There may be several ways you can improve your chances of obtaining employment in Alberta. Contact an immigrant-serving agency about qualification assessment services. They can help you decide if you should have your credentials assessed and direct you to the appropriate organization. You may also want to:

- Improve your English language skills by enrolling in an English as a Second Language program (for more information, see the English as a Second Language section).
- Acquire more training or education in your field of work if your current education and experience does not qualify you to work in Alberta. For information about upgrading programs, talk to a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency or see the Learning section of the ALIS website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca**). Alberta Works can help you get academic upgrading, take English as a Second Language courses or obtain job skills to find and keep a job. You may also be eligible to have the cost of your tuition, books and supplies covered. If you are in an approved full-time studies program, you may also qualify for Income Support to cover basic costs of living and health coverage. To find out if you are eligible, call Alberta Works at 1-866-644-5135 toll-free or (780) 644-5135 in Edmonton or get more information at their Alberta Human Resources and Employment website (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/albertaworks**).

- Do volunteer work that gives you Canadian experience, a chance to practice your English language skills and the opportunity to meet people who may be able to provide references and help in your work search.
- If there is an Alberta professional association or organization for your occupation or trade, contact the association or organization and ask about international qualification assessment services. An assessment of how your credentials compare to credentials earned in Alberta can go a long way toward assuring potential employers that you have the desired qualifications. Some associations assess qualifications themselves. Other associations refer people to Alberta Advanced Education's International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS), which assesses international education documents and compares them to education credentials in Canada. For more information, see the IQAS website (**www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/iqas**) or call (780) 427-2655 in Edmonton. You can call toll-free from elsewhere in the province by dialing 310-000, then (780) 427-2655 after the prompt.
- Take certification or registration examinations to qualify for professional or trade certification in Alberta. If there is an Alberta professional association related to your occupation visit their website or contact the organization directly. For information about certification in a trade, see Alberta Advanced Education's Apprenticeship and Industry Training website (**www.tradesecrets.org**).

Should these strategies not be appropriate in your circumstances and you cannot find work in your occupation, you might consider changing occupations.

Changing Occupations

Most Canadians change occupations several times over the course of their working lives. If you cannot find employment in your occupation or if improving your qualifications is not an option right now, you may have to look for work in another occupation. For example, if you need to start earning money right away, you may have to look for a transitional job that does not pay as well as you may be accustomed to earning.

If you are considering changing occupations, discuss your situation with a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton (outside of Edmonton, call 1-800-661-3753 toll-free) or talk to a counsellor at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre (call the Alberta Career Information Hotline for the centre nearest you). They may be able to suggest options that you have not considered.

Safety equipment such as a hard hat is sometimes required to prevent injuries on the job.

Employment Standards

Alberta's *Employment Standards Code* and Regulations set out the obligations of employees and employers. There are laws concerning:

- payment of earnings
- minimum wage
- hours of work and overtime
- days of rest and daily rest periods
- vacations and vacation pay
- general holidays
- maternity and parental leave
- employment of people under 18 years of age
- statement of earnings and deductions
- farm workers
- termination of employment.

For more information, see the Employment Standards section of the Alberta Human Resources and Employment website (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards**) or call (780) 427-3731 in Edmonton. You can call toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta by dialing 310-0000, then entering (780) 427-3731 after the prompt.

If you set up your own business and employ others, it is your responsibility to know and comply with Alberta's labour laws.

Workplace Health and Safety

There also are laws in Alberta to protect employees from hazardous or dangerous working conditions. If you believe something at your workplace is hazardous to you or someone else, discuss the problem with your employer or supervisor. If that doesn't solve the problem, contact Alberta Human Resources and Employment and ask them to investigate.

For more information, call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at (780) 415-8690 in Edmonton or 1-866-415-8690 toll-free throughout Alberta or visit the website (**www.whs.gov.ab.ca**).

Employers' Expectations

In Alberta and elsewhere in Canada, employers expect employees to be:

- **on time** for work and to meet deadlines even when a supervisor is not present. When you must be absent from work, it is important to let your employer know as soon as possible.
- **friendly, courteous and respectful** to customers, supervisors and co-workers. People from many racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds are expected to work together and treat one another with respect, no matter what position they hold in a company.
- **responsible.** If you don't know how to do something, ask. If you don't understand instructions, ask more questions. When you need help, ask. When you make a mistake, accept responsibility for your actions.
- **co-operative and helpful.** Employers prefer to hire and retain people who are enthusiastic about their work and share information with co-workers and supervisors. They look for employees who work well with other people (often called team players) so it is a good idea to help co-workers when they need assistance, if you can.

Welcome to Alberta © Government of Alberta, Human Resources and Employment

- **efficient and proactive.** Employers expect you to do what you say you will do in a timely manner. If you see something that needs to be done, do it without waiting for someone to ask you to do it. If you are not sure, ask.
- **flexible and adaptable.** The work world is constantly changing. The best way to handle change is to keep learning new skills.
- **honest and trustworthy.** Employers have to trust employees with their business and know the people they hire are reliable.

For more information, see the publication *Job Smart: Tips for staying employed* published by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. To order your free copy, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free. You can also download or order a copy on-line from the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**).

Employment Insurance

Employment Insurance (EI) provides temporary financial assistance for unemployed Canadians while they look for work or upgrade their skills. To qualify for EI, you must have:

- applied for EI
- paid into EI
- been without work and without pay for at least seven consecutive days
- worked for the required number of insurable hours (based on where you live and the unemployment rate in your economic region at the time you file your claim).

When you leave a full-time job, your employer must provide a Record of Employment that states the number of hours you worked and your wage and why you no longer work for that employer. To apply for EI, you must have Records of Employment from all of your employers for the last 52 weeks.

If your employer does not provide a Record of Employment, notify the Employment Standards branch of Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Phone (780) 427-3731 in Edmonton or dial 310-0000 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta and enter (780) 427-3731 following the prompt. Even if you don't have a copy of your Record of Employment you should contact the Employment Insurance section of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, tell them you were unable to obtain your record of employment and ask to apply for Employment Insurance.

For information about the number of insurable hours required to qualify for regular benefits in your region, information about EI benefits or to apply on-line, see the Financial Benefits/Employment Insurance section of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website (**www.hrsdc.gc.ca**) or call 1-800-206-7218 toll-free. Or, visit your nearest Canada-Alberta Service Centre (call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton or 1-800-661-3753 toll-free to find the centre nearest you).

Workers' Compensation

If you have an accident on the job, you may be eligible for benefits through the Workers' Compensation Board. If an accident at work causes you to miss work, look for information about how to make a claim on the WCB website (**www.wcb.ab.ca**) or call the Workers' Compensation Board at (780) 498-3999 in Edmonton or 1-866-922-9221 toll-free from other Alberta locations.

If you set up your own business and employ others, it is your responsibility to register with the Workers' Compensation Board.

Self-Employment

Many immigrants to Alberta own and operate their own businesses. The Business Link, a service centre funded by the governments of Alberta and Canada, has a library of business publications and offers help on the following business topics:

- start-up
- financing
- marketing
- operations
- legal
- taxation
- innovation
- import and export issues
- e-business.

Business advice is available from staff and guest counsellors. The Business Link also offers seminars on a wide variety of topics.

For more information, visit the website (**www.cbsc.org/alberta**) or phone (780) 422-7722 in Edmonton or 1-800-272-9675 toll-free elsewhere in Alberta.

Another source of information for small business owners is the Alberta First website (**www.albertafirst.com**) For information about how to start a business, see the Starting Your Business section of Alberta First (**www.alberta-canada.com/startbus**).

The Alberta First website also provides small business guides in the Business Information section of the website (**www.albertafirst.com/businfo**) plus information about:

- industries in Alberta
- Alberta communities and regions
- businesses for sale, commercial and industrial properties for sale and other opportunities.

For more information, contact the Alberta Economic Development office nearest you (look under Government of Alberta in the blue or white pages of your telephone book).

EDUCATION

Most jobs in Alberta require at least a high school (secondary) education and many require post-secondary training. Many adults return to school to improve their education or learn about changing technology. Immigrants often have to improve their English language skills or upgrade their job qualifications before they can find employment in Alberta.

Alberta's Education System

Each province in Canada has a different education system. The following information applies to the Alberta education system.

By law, children living in Alberta must attend school from ages six to 16. Public education is provided free of charge for children and young people under 20 years of age, up to the end of secondary school. Other information on grades and ages follows:

- **Kindergarten** is an educational program for children who are under six years of age as of September 1. Most children enter Kindergarten one year before starting Grade 1. Parents decide if their children will attend. Early Childhood Services (ECS) is another name for programs available for children prior to entering Grade 1. For other ECS programs, refer to the child care information the Living in Alberta chapter.
- Children start **elementary school** in Grade 1 at about age six. Some school boards allow children to register at 5 1/2 years of age. Elementary school usually ends after Grade 6.
- **Junior high school** starts at Grade 7 and ends after Grade 9. Most students in junior high school are between the ages of 11 and 15 years.
- **Senior high school** students are usually between the ages of 16 and 18 years. Senior high school starts at Grade 10 and ends after Grade 12.

After completing the required high school courses, students must pass a series of examinations that include provincially set examinations to qualify for an Alberta High School Diploma. Students are expected to find out which courses are required to enter the post-secondary institutions they might wish to attend and to select their high school courses accordingly.

Most children attend public, separate, francophone or charter schools that are part of the public education system. Following are some basic features of different kinds of schools:

- **Public schools** provide basic, universal education.
- Most **separate schools** are Roman Catholic schools. In some areas of the province, they are Protestant schools. These schools provide basic education for Roman Catholic or Protestant students.
- **Parents whose first language is French and who want their children educated in French govern Francophone schools.**
- **Charter schools** offer more choice in education programs, teaching methods or learning environments than may be offered in the regular school system. Charter schools follow the Alberta Programs of Study and students are required to write provincial achievement tests and Grade 12 diploma exams.

Those schools are funded by a part of the taxes homeowners must pay to local governments and provincial government revenues, so parents are not required to pay tuition fees. However, parents may have to pay fees for things such as transportation, textbook rentals or art supplies. Some of those fees are to be paid when the child registers as a student. For families who do not have enough money, school districts have an appeal process where parents can request that they not have to pay the fees. Parents who choose to educate their children at home may do so entirely or in part, provided they meet the requirements of the *School Act* and home education regulation.

If you choose to send your child to a private school, you will be required to pay some or all of the costs. Before registering your child in a private school, it is important to find out what the costs will be and if students in the school can earn credits toward an Alberta High School Diploma. Private schools set their own standards for enrolment, often based on following a belief in a particular religious faith or educational philosophy.

Schools send report cards home at least twice a year to show how well each child is learning. Parent-teacher interviews, open houses and school council meetings give parents opportunities to meet teachers and learn more about school activities, class assignments and teacher expectations. Many problems can be solved or avoided altogether by learning as much as possible about your child's school.

For more information about Alberta's education system, see the Alberta Education website (**www.education.gov.ab.ca**).

School Days

For most schools in Alberta, the school year starts in late August or early September and ends in late June. Some schools operate all year. Other features of school operating procedures include:

- The school day usually starts between 8 and 9 a.m. and ends between 3 and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- Schools are closed on weekends and legislated holidays. They also are closed between Christmas and New Year's Day, and for one week called Spring Break in March or April.
- Each school designates about two days in the school year as Professional Development (PD) days. On these days, students do not go to school because teachers are attending activities to enhance their teaching.

www.gov.ab.ca/learning/documents/Alberta_Human_Resources_and_Employment

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During snow storms, listen to a local radio station for announcements about schools closing or changes to school bus schedules.

Enrolling a Child

Parents can choose which school their children will attend. When choosing a school outside of your local area, your options will depend on the availability of space in the program, services and transportation. Check with your local school board to find out which schools in your area, if any, offer the types of programs and services you want (for example, English as a Second Language classes or instruction in languages other than English).

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs help children learn English more quickly and adjust to Canadian customs and social expectations. For information about ESL programs in general, see Information for Parents in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 section of the Alberta Education website (**www.education.gov.ab.ca**).

To enrol your child in school, take your child, an interpreter (if you need one) and the following documents (if you have them) to the school:

- identification documents (for example, child's passport, birth certificate or permanent resident status documents)
- school documents from your home country (for example, report cards, course outlines, examples of school work your child has done)
- your child's immunization record.

The school principal may ask questions about your child and will put your child in the appropriate class.

English as a Second Language

Many schools and agencies offer courses for adults in English as a Second Language (ESL). Classes may be offered full-time (five hours a day) or part-time. You may have to pay to take ESL courses. Or, you may qualify for government-funded language training through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program or a provincially funded program such as Alberta Works.

If you are interested in taking an ESL class, the following assessment and referral centres can provide current information about class locations and funding programs in Calgary and Edmonton. This service is free and confidential.

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
Immigrant Language and
Vocational Assessment—
Referral Centre
1401, 910-7th Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3N8
Telephone: (403) 262-2656

Catholic Social Services
Language Assessment,
Referral and Counselling Centre
10709-105 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 2X3
Telephone: (780) 424-3545

Counsellors at these referral centres may be able to provide services in your first language. Tell them about your education, experience, needs and interests. They will refer you to appropriate ESL classes or other education programs.

If you live outside Edmonton and Calgary, contact an immigrant-serving agency or a Citizenship and Immigration Canada office and ask for the local assessment and referral agency.

Post-Secondary Education

Adults, young and old, take post-secondary education programs to improve their knowledge and skills. These programs are offered by universities, public colleges, private colleges, technical institutes, private vocational schools and Community Adult Learning Councils. The skills and knowledge you wish to acquire should determine your choice of program.

Universities offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs that prepare people for work of a theoretical

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nature and work in fields such as business, law or medicine. There are four universities in Alberta:

- the University of Alberta (in Edmonton)
- the University of Calgary
- the University of Lethbridge
- Athabasca University.

Athabasca University is a distance learning university. Students study written and audiovisual lessons, and submit assignments by the mail or through the Internet.

Public colleges offer certificate, diploma, academic upgrading, university transfer, apprenticeship, continuing education and applied degree programs.

Private colleges offer certificate, diploma, academic upgrading, university transfer, continuing education and accredited degree programs at the university level. They often are affiliated with a religious organization.

Technical institutes offer certificate, diploma, applied degree, apprenticeship and continuing education programs. Most courses are related to trades or technical work. There are two institutes of technology in Alberta: NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) in Edmonton and SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology) in Calgary.

Private vocational schools are licensed under the *Private Vocational Schools Act*. These schools provide training for specific occupations such as auctioneer, bartender, model or computer-aided drafting technician.

Apprenticeship training is a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training in a trade. In Alberta, over 50 trades (cook, baker, hairstylist, electrician, plumber, agricultural mechanic, machinist, etc.) have apprenticeship training programs. For information about apprenticeship, see Alberta Advanced Education's Apprenticeship and Industry Training website (**www.tradesecrets.org**).

Community Adult Learning Councils offer or support part-time, non-credit adult learning opportunities including adult literacy and English as a Second Language classes. For more information, see the Community Based Adult Learning section of the Alberta Advanced Education website (**www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca**) or call (780) 427-5624 in Edmonton or dial 310-0000 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta, then enter (780) 427-5624 after the prompt.

Before enrolling in any post-secondary program, it is important to find out:

- what employers in Alberta think about the program
- what the entrance requirements are
- how much it costs (tuition, supplies and books)
- how long the program takes to complete.

Institutions and programs have different entrance requirements as well as different costs. To be admitted to some programs, you must have a high school diploma (or an equivalent combination of education and experience) and a minimum average in specified high school courses. Entrance requirements for similar programs at different institutions may not be the same.

For information about post-secondary institutions and programs:

- see the Learning section of the ALIS website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca**)
- see the Alberta Advanced Education website (**www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca**)
- call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton (outside of Edmonton, call 1-800-661-3753 toll-free)
- visit an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre. For the centre nearest you, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline.
- talk to a reference librarian at your local library.

Student Financial Assistance

Alberta student financial assistance programs help post-secondary students in financial need pay for their education. It is based on the idea that the cost of post-secondary education is a shared responsibility among students, parents, spouses or partners and government.

To be eligible for financial assistance, you must:

- be a resident of Alberta
- prove financial need

- be enrolled as a full-time student at a designated or approved school
- maintain passing grades in your studies.

The amount of financial assistance you may receive is calculated by subtracting your resources from your allowable expenses, up to a maximum loan amount per academic year. Student loans must be repaid after students graduate. Grants do not have to be repaid.

For more information, see the Students Finance section of the ALIS website (**www.alis.gov.ab.ca/studentsfinance**) or call the Student Funding Contact Centre at (780) 427-3722 in Edmonton or 1-800-222-6485 toll-free throughout Canada.

HEALTH CARE

Alberta has a very good health care system. When you are sick or injured, you should seek treatment as soon as possible.

Health Link

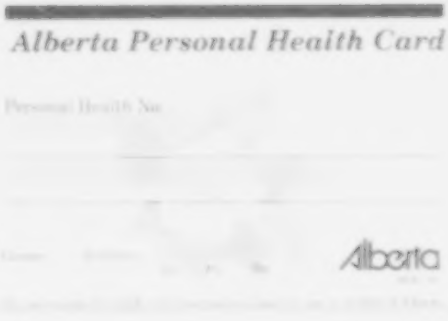
Health Link provides free health information and advice. At any time of the day or night, you can talk to a registered nurse on the phone or find information on a Health Link website. If you have a health-related question or would like to discuss a medical problem with a registered nurse, call Health Link at (403) 943-5465 in Calgary, (780) 408-5465 in Edmonton or 1-866-408-5465 toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta. This telephone service is free and confidential. If required, Health Link can arrange for a confidential interpreter.

There are three Health Link websites:

- provincewide website (**www.healthlinkalberta.ca**)
- South (**www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/healthlink**)
- North (**www.capitalhealth.ca/YourHealth/CHLink**).

Health Link websites provide:

- information on a wide range of health topics
- information about health services and programs in Alberta
- links to service and physician directories in Alberta.



Always take your Alberta Personal Health Card with you when you visit a doctor, hospital, health clinic and laboratory.

Emergency Medical Services

In emergencies, sick or injured people should be taken to a hospital emergency department right away. Emergencies are health problems that require **immediate** care (for example, a broken arm or heart attack). The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) pays for treatment in emergency departments.

Call the emergency number for your area (911 in most parts of the province) if you need an ambulance to take a sick or injured person to the hospital. Ambulance costs are **not** paid by AHCIP and can be quite expensive. However, the cost of an ambulance may be covered in some cases:

- Private insurance plans, including Alberta Blue Cross, may pay for all or most of the cost of an ambulance ride.
- Vehicle insurance plans may pay ambulance costs if you are involved in a collision.
- Alberta Human Resources and Employment will pay if you receive Income Support.
- Some employee benefit plans cover ambulance costs.
- AHCIP provides Alberta Blue Cross coverage for ambulance service for senior citizens (people 65 years of age and older).

Payment is not required at the time of the trip. No one will be refused ambulance service if they cannot afford to pay. Individuals are sent a bill afterwards and payment arrangements can be made for those who have difficulty paying.

Not all hospitals have emergency departments and not all emergency departments are open 24 hours a day. It is a good idea to find out where the nearest emergency departments are located and put this information near a telephone where you can find it quickly in an emergency.

If you don't know the location and hours of the emergency department nearest you and an emergency occurs, ambulance attendants, the people answering 911 emergency calls or Health Link can direct you to a hospital emergency department.

Hospitals

People are admitted to hospital as inpatients only if they are referred by a physician: a family doctor, specialist or emergency department doctor.

Hospital gowns are provided for patients to use free of charge but many patients bring their own nightclothes, slippers and housecoats. Medically required hospital expenses, including meals and a bed in a ward, are paid for by the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP). Additional costs for private or semi-private rooms may be covered by private insurance plans.

Most hospitals have rules about visiting hours and the number of people allowed to visit at the same time. For their own protection, young children may not be allowed to visit in some areas of the hospital.

All hospitals have social workers to help patients deal with non-medical problems (for example, arranging care for family members left at home or follow-up care after you have been discharged from hospital). A social worker may be able to arrange for an interpreter if you need one.

Other Health Services

Physicians

In Alberta, physicians are either family doctors or specialists. Family doctors treat most medical problems. Specialists treat special types of health problems. To see a specialist, you usually have to be referred by a family doctor.

You may be able to find a family doctor who speaks your first language. There are several ways to find a doctor:

- Talk to other members of your community, neighbours and counsellors at immigrant-serving agencies.
- Use the physician directory in the Find a Physician section of the College of Physicians and Surgeons website (**www.cpsa.ab.ca**). You can search by physician's name, languages spoken, location, qualifications or interests.
- Phone Health Link and ask for the names of physicians who are accepting new patients in your area.
- Use the physician directories on your health region's website. To find your health region's website, see the Health Regions/Map section of the Alberta Health and Wellness website (**www.health.gov.ab.ca**).
- Look under Physicians and Surgeons in the yellow pages of the telephone book.

Before visiting a doctor, call the doctor's office to make an appointment. Someone at the office will arrange a day and time for you to see the doctor. Take your Alberta Personal Health Card to your appointment to ensure that the doctor sends the bill to the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan. You are responsible for paying the cost of services not covered by AHCIP.

During your visit, you will be expected to answer the doctor's questions and describe any health problems you have. If the doctor does not speak your first language, you may want to take an interpreter along. Most doctors will do a physical examination before prescribing medications or treatment.

Many people find it helpful to return to the same doctor whenever they need medical help. This way, the doctor becomes familiar with their health history and needs.

If you suffer a life-threatening injury or health problem such as a heart attack or stroke, go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital to obtain immediate medical assistance (see Hospitals in this chapter). If you cannot get to the hospital on your own, call your community's emergency telephone number (911 in most parts of the province) and ask for an ambulance (see Emergency Medical Services in this chapter).

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Some cities have walk-in clinics that do not require patients to have an appointment to see a doctor. If you have a health problem that should be cared for as soon as possible, but is not life-threatening, you can go to the nearest walk-in clinic instead of going to a hospital emergency department. Walk-in clinics are usually open later than other clinics but are not open 24 hours a day. Telephone numbers and addresses for medical clinics are listed under Clinics in the yellow pages of your telephone book and on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

If a doctor prescribes medication for you, take the prescription to a drugstore or another store that has a pharmacy. Pharmacists prepare medications and explain when and how they should be taken. Prescribed medications must be taken **only** by the person for whom they were prescribed. If you do not have private insurance coverage, you will be expected to pay for medication yourself.

Eye Doctors

If you have a medical problem with your eyes, make an appointment with a family physician. If necessary, your family physician will refer you to an eye specialist (ophthalmologist).

If you need vision testing or help deciding if you need eyeglasses, make an appointment with an optometrist. To find an optometrist near you, see the Find an Optometrist section of the Alberta College of Optometrists website (**www.collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca**) or look under Optometrists in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan does **not** pay for routine eye examinations or eyeglasses except for a limited number of examinations each year for children under 19 years of age and senior citizens (people 65 years of age and older).

Dentists

There are several ways to find a dentist:

- Talk to friends or counsellors at immigrant-serving agencies.
- Use the Dentist Locator section of the Alberta Dental Association and College website (**www.abda.ab.ca**).
- Look under Dentists in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan does **not** pay for routine dental care **except** for limited coverage provided to residents and their eligible dependants who receive Income Support.

Unless you work for an organization that has an employee dental care insurance plan, you probably will be required to pay all of your dental costs. Some regional health authorities offer free dental care services for children. For more information, contact Health Link or the regional health authority for your area.

Mental Health Services

Moving to a new country is an emotional experience: exciting but often confusing and sometimes frightening. Even after you have found a place to live and work, it will take time to get used to your new life in Canada. The best way to adjust is to get involved in your community. Talk to people even if you make mistakes when speaking English. Ask questions. As you learn more about your new home, you will feel more in control.

If someone you know is having problems adjusting to life in Alberta, there are many ways to get help:

- Call the Alberta Mental Health Board Help Line toll-free at 1-877-303-2642. You can talk to a mental health professional at any time of the day or night. You do not have to give your name.
- Call Health Link to talk to a registered nurse. This also is a 24-hour service that is free and confidential.
- Check your phone book for the numbers of distress line services in your area. They are usually listed near the front of the white pages.
- Talk to a family doctor or public health nurse. Health professionals will not discuss your case with others without your permission.
- Ask a counsellor at an immigrant-serving agency for a referral.

Addiction Services

If gambling or alcohol, tobacco or other drug use is causing problems for you, a family member or friend, contact your family doctor or the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). Their counselling services are confidential and free of charge. For more information, see the AADAC website (**www.aadac.com**) or call the AADAC Help Line toll-free at 1-866-332-2322.

Paying for Care and Equipment

Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan

The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) covers the cost of many basic health services for residents of Alberta. Residents are lawfully entitled to remain in Canada, make their home in Alberta and ordinarily live here.

Most Albertans pay monthly premiums through their employers or directly to AHCIP. You must register with AHCIP within three months of your arrival in Alberta.

If you decide not to participate in AHCIP, you will have to pay the full cost of all the hospital and health care services you use. Because this can be extremely expensive, most Albertans choose to participate in AHCIP.

To register, you must submit a completed application form and a copy of your Canada Entry Permit. AHCIP application forms are available:

- on-line in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan/Forms section of the Alberta Health and Wellness website (**www.health.gov.ab.ca**).
- by phone from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. In Edmonton, call (780) 427-1432. From elsewhere in the province, dial 310-0000 toll-free, then enter (780) 427-1432 after the prompt.
- by mail from the following mailing address:

  Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan
  Box 1360, Station Main
  Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N3

- by fax from (780) 422-0102.
- in person at an AHCIP office from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

  Edmonton: 10025 Jasper Avenue
  Calgary: 727-7th Avenue SW

AHCIP coverage is available from the first day you arrive in Alberta, provided your Canada entry papers are in order and you apply within three months of your arrival. Separate Alberta Personal Health Cards are issued for each member of the family. These cards must be presented when you visit doctors' offices, laboratories, hospitals and health clinics. Only the person named on the card may use it.

AHCIP pays for medically required services that are provided by physicians in their offices or at hospitals. The cost of some treatments provided by chiropractors, podiatrists or optometrists may be partially covered by AHCIP. AHCIP does **not** cover the cost of medication or ambulance services, or the cost of treatments provided by acupuncturists, naturopaths or dentists. When you apply, you will be given a brochure describing the types of services covered.

If you cannot afford to pay AHCIP premiums and you have been a resident of Alberta for 12 consecutive months, you can apply to AHCIP for a subsidy. A subsidy allows you to pay a lower premium.

For more information about AHCIP, see the Health Care Insurance Plan section of the Alberta Health and Wellness website (**www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip**) or contact an AHCIP office.

Alberta Child Health Benefit

If your family has a low income, you may be eligible for the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB). This is a health insurance plan that covers the costs of basic dental, optical, emergency ambulance, prescription drugs and essential diabetic supplies for children in low-income families under 18 years of age and children 18 or 19 who are attending high school and live at home with their parent or guardian. It does not cost anything to be enrolled in this plan. The following chart shows how family income and the number of children affects whether you may be eligible for financial assistance.

Number of Eligible Children	You may be eligible if your non-taxable income is
1	$24,397 or less
2	$26,397 or less
3	$28,397 or less
4	$30,397 or less
More than 4	Add $2,000 for each additional eligible child

Children whose parents are not permanent residents of Alberta, including Family Class Immigrants, are not eligible for the Alberta Child Health Benefit.

For more information, see the Health Benefits/Alberta Child Health Benefit section of the Alberta Human Resources and Employment website (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/achb**) or call (780) 427-6848 in Edmonton or 1-877-4MY-KIDS (1-877-469-5437) toll-free from elsewhere in the province.

Alberta Aids to Daily Living

The Alberta Aids to Daily Living program provides financial assistance for people who have a long-term disability or are terminally ill. Assistance is provided to obtain authorized basic medical equipment and supplies so people can function more independently in their homes. Benefits include equipment such as wheelchairs, oxygen, hearing aids and artificial limbs.

To be eligible for this program, you must:

- have a long-term disability lasting six months or more, or a chronic illness or terminal illness
- be a resident of Alberta
- have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number.

If you believe you could benefit from this program, contact the home care office in your health region and request an assessment. To find your health region, see the Health Regions/Map section of the Alberta Health and Wellness website (**www.health.gov.ab.ca**) or look in the blue pages or white pages of your telephone book under the name of your community.

For more information about Alberta Aids to Daily Living, see the Alberta Aids to Daily Living section of the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports website (**www.seniors.gov.ab.ca**) or contact your regional health authority.

Private Medical Insurance

Many people supplement Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) coverage with a private medical insurance plan. Private health insurance plans pay for some services not covered by AHCIP. For example, private health insurance plans may pay for ambulance services, prescribed medications, home nursing, dental care needed as the result of an accident, hearing aids or hospital charges for private and semi-private rooms.

Most private insurance companies sell medical insurance only to groups of people, not individuals. For example, people working for a particular company may obtain group coverage through their employer.

Individuals can buy Alberta Blue Cross supplementary health insurance coverage through AHCIP. For information, see the Alberta Health and Wellness website at **www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip/prescription/non_group.html** or contact the nearest AHCIP office. Look in the blue pages or white pages of your telephone book under the name of your community to find regional office locations.

Public Health Services

Public health services are provided through public health offices and community health centres to help people **prevent** health problems.

Public health nurses and other staff at public health offices and community health centres offer free health information on a wide variety of topics such as child care, nutrition, dental health, injury prevention, prevention of communicable diseases (for example, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases), family planning and birth control. They also offer health programs for pregnant women, babies and children. If required, they may be able to arrange for an interpreter.

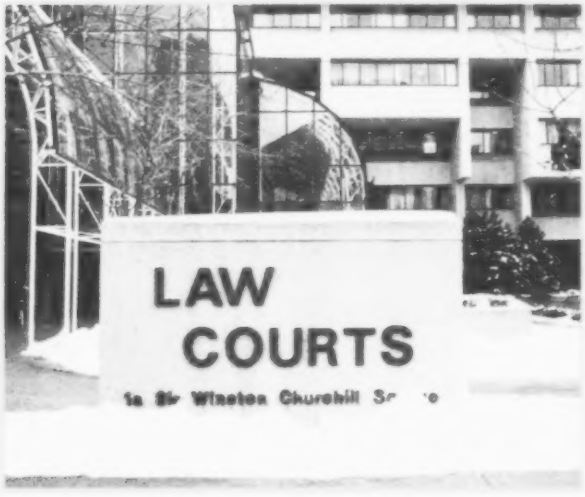
To find a public health office or community health centre, call Health Link or your local health region, talk to someone at an immigrant-serving agency or look in the blue pages or white pages of your telephone directory.

Immunization

Everyone who comes to Alberta from another country should be immunized for protection against certain diseases. Newcomers often have been immunized against some diseases before they arrive but may not have been immunized against all of the most serious diseases. If you have immunization records from your home country, show them to a doctor or nurse at a public health office or community health centre.

All children in Alberta are immunized free of charge at public health offices or community health centres, or by visiting nurses at schools. Parents are asked to give permission for their children to be immunized.

LAWS and Legal System



Rights and Responsibilities

As a resident of Alberta, you may have rights and freedoms that you did not have before. However, you also have a responsibility to learn and obey the laws here. If you break a law, you cannot use language problems or ignorance of the law as an acceptable defense.

The Canadian Legal System

Canadian laws are designed to protect individual rights and freedoms, settle disputes and protect society at large. With the exception of the province of Quebec, Canada's legal system is based on the British legal system and is quite different from systems based on the Napoleonic Code, which is the source of Quebec's Civil Code laws. Anyone charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

There are two types of law in Canada: criminal law and civil law.

Criminal laws protect individuals and Canadian society in general:

- The police investigate criminal offences.
- Criminal laws cover many types of behaviour including assault; murder; shoplifting (stealing from a store when it is open for business), fraud and other types of theft; and trafficking and possession of marijuana and other narcotic drugs.

  Example: If a husband assaults his wife or children, he is breaking a criminal law. He can be arrested by police and tried in criminal court. If he is found guilty, the court may decide to send the man to jail.

- People may have to go to court because they have been accused of a crime, witnessed a crime or been a victim of a crime. They are given a document saying when and where they must appear in court. If they fail to appear in court at that time, they are breaking the law.
- The government pays the cost of prosecuting criminal charges in court. This includes the cost of an interpreter if one is needed.

Civil laws are designed to settle private arguments or disputes among individuals, businesses and organizations. For example, if people disagree on who owns certain property, they can go to civil court to resolve the problem. The court uses property laws to determine who is right. If a tenant and a landlord have a disagreement over a security deposit, there are civil laws that will determine who is right. Other things to keep in mind about civil laws:

- They are enforced through the authority of the courts.
- People may go to court to settle problems with other people, businesses or organizations. This is usually done through a lawyer but it is possible to go to court without a lawyer.
- Individuals pay civil court costs. If an interpreter is needed, the individual involved must pay the cost.

Police Procedures

When police arrest people, they must:

- identify themselves as police officers
- tell people they are under arrest

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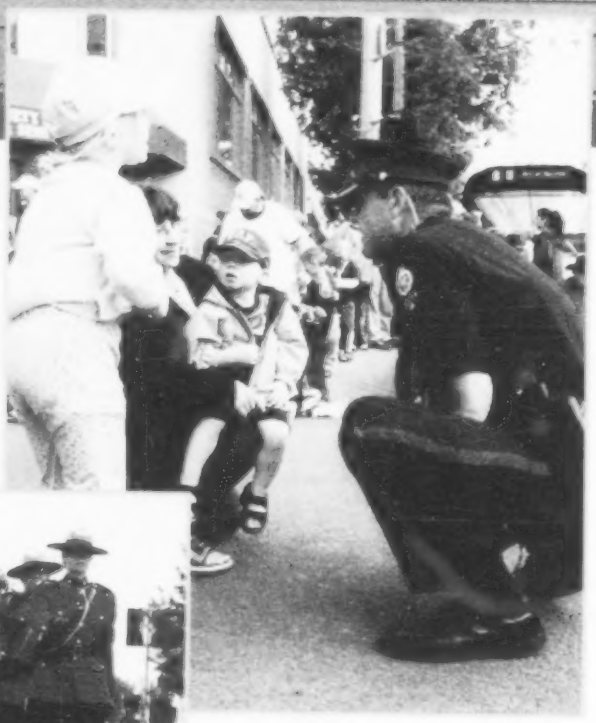

- give a reason for the arrest
- tell people they have the right to speak with a lawyer without delay
- supply a telephone book to look up numbers for lawyers.

If you are arrested, you must go with the officer. It is a serious offence to assault a police officer. It also is a serious crime to offer a bribe to a police officer in Canada.

After telling you that you are under arrest and advising you of your rights, the police officer will probably put handcuffs on you and take you to a police station. The police may search suspects for weapons or evidence. You have the right to make a telephone call and talk to a lawyer. The lawyer will explain your rights and provide advice.

You do not have to answer police questions. If you are charged with a criminal offence, the police have the right to take your picture and fingerprints. The police also have the right to demand a breath or blood sample if they believe you have been driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The police may release you themselves or let the court make that decision. If the police wish to keep you in jail, they must obtain a court order (usually within 24 hours of your arrest). If the court decides to release you, you must abide by conditions imposed by the court. For example, you may be required to surrender your passport or pay bail (money that is returned to you after you fulfill the conditions of the court order).

If you think you have been treated unfairly or badly by the police, you can complain to the Police Chief or the Police Commission in your city (look in the blue or white pages of your telephone book) or the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP (call 1-800-665-6878 toll-free or visit the website at **www.cpc.gc.ca**) and they will investigate.

Lawyers

Many people who have to go to court hire a lawyer to advise and represent them. For a referral to a lawyer, contact an immigrant-serving agency or the Law Society of Alberta's Lawyer Referral Service (dial (403) 228-1722 in Calgary or call 1-800-661-1095 toll-free in other Alberta locations). Lawyers' offices are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone book and on the **www.mytelus.com/phonebook/index.vm** website.

Lawyers' services can be expensive. If you cannot afford to pay, Legal Aid or law students may help you under certain circumstances:

- **Legal Aid** provides lawyers for people who have low incomes. For more information, see the Legal Aid Society of Alberta website (**www.legalaid.ab.ca**) or look in the white pages of your telephone book.

- **Law students** provide free legal advice or representation on less complex legal matters. For more information, see the University of Alberta Student Legal Services website (**www.slsedmonton.com**) or the Calgary Legal Guidance website (**www.clg.ab.ca**). Or, look in the white pages of the Edmonton telephone book under Student Legal Services or the Calgary telephone book under Calgary Legal Guidance.

Eligibility for these services is based on financial need. If your income is too high, you will have to pay for your own lawyer.

Human Rights

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees that basic human rights and freedoms are observed in legislation and the administration of justice. The charter guarantees:

- **fundamental freedoms** such as freedom of speech, thought and religion (for example, the freedom of newspapers to write about anything, the freedom to gather with other people and discuss anything you wish).
- **equality rights** which ensure people have equal protection and benefit from the law. In particular, equality rights protect people from discrimination based on race, country of origin, religion, colour, sex, age and mental or physical disability. This also means that a person who does not speak or understand English has a right to have an interpreter present at legal proceedings.
- **legal rights** which include the right to be presumed innocent of a crime until proven guilty in court, the right to contact a lawyer if you are arrested by the police, the right to a fair trial and the right to protection against the police entering your home without legal justification.
- **mobility rights** which include the right to travel, live and look for work anywhere in Canada.

If you feel your rights under the *Charter* have been violated, talk to a lawyer or contact the Court Challenges Program of Canada (CCPC). The CCPC provides financial assistance for important court cases that advance language and equality rights guaranteed under Canada's Constitution. For more information, see the CCPC website (**www.ccppcj.ca**) or call (204) 942-0022 (collect calls are accepted).

Both the Government of Canada (federal) and the Government of Alberta (provincial) have commissions that investigate complaints of discrimination. These commissions have different areas of responsibility, such as:

- The *Canadian Human Rights Act* applies to federally regulated employers, unions and service providers who offer goods, services, facilities or accommodation to the public. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and conviction for which pardon has been granted. For more information, see the Canadian Human Rights Commission website (**www.chrc-ccdp.ca**) or call one of the following telephone numbers:

  The Canadian Human Rights Commission
  308, 10010-106 Street
  Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3L8
  Telephone: (780) 495-4040 in Edmonton
  1-800-999-6899 toll-free
  1-888-643-3304 (toll-free TTY line for deaf and hard of hearing persons)
  E-mail: info.com@chrc-ccdp.ca

- The *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act* applies to provincially regulated employers and service providers. The *Act* prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, colour, gender, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, source of income, physical disability, mental disability and sexual orientation. For more information, see the Alberta Human Rights and

Citizenship Commission website (**www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca**) or call one of the Commission's offices:

Edmonton
800, 10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7
Telephone: (780) 427-7661
To call toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000, then enter the area code and telephone number after the prompt.

Calgary
310, 525-11 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2R 0C9
Telephone: (403) 297-6571
To call toll-free from elsewhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000, then enter the area code and telephone number after the prompt.

TTY service for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing

Edmonton: (780) 427-1597
Calgary: (403) 297-5639
Toll-free: 1-800-232-7215
E-mail: humanrights@gov.ab.ca

If you believe you are being treated unfairly because of your race, religious beliefs, colour, gender or any other personal characteristic listed above, you can call the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission or the Canadian Human Rights Commission to make a confidential inquiry. If you choose to make a complaint, do it as soon as possible after the incident. After 12 months have passed, a Commission may not be able to accept a complaint.

A complaint can be made with the help of an interpreter if necessary. Immigrant-serving agencies may help with interpretation and translation.

If a complaint is accepted, the appropriate commission will try to get both sides in the dispute to agree on a settlement. A settlement can range from a letter of apology and an education session for an employer, to money paid for lost wages and pain and suffering. If no settlement is reached, the commission investigates the complaint and makes a decision that is subject to judicial review (federal) or can be appealed (provincial).

Family Law

In Canada, it is a crime to use violence against anyone including family members.

The law protects all family members including children, spouses and older people from abuse and neglect (for example, leaving a family member alone without adequate care). Abuse can take any of the following forms:

- **Physical abuse** (for example, beating, slapping, punching, locking someone out of their home) is a criminal offense.
- **Sexual abuse** (forced, unwanted sex) is a criminal offence.
- **Emotional abuse** (for example, constant criticism, threats to hurt or kill a family member, denying a family member the opportunity to have friends, threats to send a family member back to his or her home country, destruction of possessions) is not a criminal offence but may provide legal grounds for divorce or other family law action.
- **Economic abuse** (for example, allowing a spouse no money or opportunity to improve his or her earning capacity) is not a criminal offence but may provide legal grounds for divorce or other family law action.

Families have the right to make most decisions about how to raise their children. However, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* protects children from neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional injury. For example, leaving children who are under 12 years of age alone in a house could be considered neglect. For more information, see the Enhancement Act section of the Alberta Children's Services website (**www.child.gov.ab.ca**).

Caseworkers from Alberta Children's Services try to keep families together. Workers get involved when family members ask for help because they are having difficulty protecting or caring for a child or when a member of the community (for example, a neighbour, teacher or police officer) reports a concern about a child's safety or well-being. A department caseworker meets with the family and reviews the child's needs and the family's needs and makes recommendations. If child protection laws have been broken, children can be taken away from one or both parents permanently or until conditions in the home change.

To talk to a child welfare worker, contact your regional Child and Family Services Authority (see the Regional Authorities section of the Alberta Children's Services website (**www.child.gov.ab.ca**) or look under Government of Alberta in the blue or white pages of the telephone book).

If you believe that a child is being abused, it is your responsibility to call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437 toll-free. You can call free of charge day or night. The name of anyone who reports a child abuse problem is kept confidential (secret).

If you know someone who is being abused, talk to a family doctor, the police or a community health nurse at a public health office or community health centre. Or, in the case of an abused woman, call a Women's Emergency Shelter. To find the phone numbers of women's shelters in your area, see the Family Violence Prevention section of the Alberta Children's Services website (**www.child.gov.ab.ca**) or the inside front cover of your telephone book.

Through the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, the police can help victims of family violence obtain a temporary emergency protection order that requires the abuser to stay away from family members and the home. This allows the victim and family members, but not the abuser, to stay in the home if it is safe. The victim also can apply to the court for a longer-term order that allows police to enter the home and assist victims of family violence if necessary.

Marriage, Separation and Divorce

When serious problems develop in a marriage, counselling may help the couple stay together by improving their relationship or, if necessary, to end the relationship as peacefully as possible. Immigrant-serving agencies, community health nurses and family doctors can refer you to counselling agencies.

A husband or wife who is sponsored by his or her spouse as a landed immigrant **cannot** be deported because of marital separation. Those on a Visitor's Record, Minister's Permit or Work Permit should seek legal assistance or speak with an immigration officer at a Citizenship and Immigration Canada office.

The court will grant a divorce if the marriage has broken down. The law states that marriage breakdown has occurred if:

- the husband and wife have lived away from each other for one year with the understanding that the marriage is over
- one of them has committed adultery (had sexual intercourse with someone else) and has not been forgiven by the other person
- the husband or the wife has been physically or mentally cruel to the other person, making it unbearable to continue the relationship.

Anyone wanting a divorce should contact a lawyer. In some cases, the Legal Aid Society of Alberta provides lawyers to help people who cannot afford to pay.

A divorce granted by a court legally ends a marriage. Sometimes the former husband and wife continue to have legal and financial responsibilities to each other. For example, one may be required to pay support (money) to the other.

Parents always continue to share legal and financial responsibility for their children. If they cannot agree on how to share these responsibilities, they can go to court and ask the court to make a decision. For example, if parents cannot agree on who will have custody of the children, divorce law gives judges

some basic principles to consider when making a decision. The best interests of the children come first. The court will not consider the past behaviour of the husband or wife unless that behaviour reflects on the person's ability to act as a parent.

Adult Interdependent Relationships

Alberta has laws that deal with the financial and property responsibilities of people who are not married but are together in an economically and emotionally interdependent relationship. This includes common-law (not married but living together) relationships and committed platonic (not sexual) relationships where two people agree to share emotional and economic responsibilities. You are considered to be in an adult interdependent partner relationship if:

- you and the other person have been in a committed relationship for at least three years
- you have a child together
- you have a written adult interdependent partner agreement.

Adult interdependent partners must financially support one another and can apply for emergency protection in cases of family violence (see above).

For more information about family law, see the Family Law Information Centre website (**www.albertacourts.ab.ca/familylaw**) or contact one of the offices listed below:

Edmonton
Main Floor, Law Courts Building
1A Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 0R2
Telephone: (780) 415-0404
Fax: (780) 415-0403

Calgary
604 J.J. Bowlen Building
620-7th Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2P 0Y8
Telephone: (403) 297-6600
Fax: (403) 297-6605

Immigrants who are permanent residents of Canada can apply to become Canadian citizens.

Canadian Citizenship

Canada's immigration and citizenship laws are complex and subject to change. Before you make any important decisions, discuss your circumstances with citizenship and immigration officials or an immigration representative. For information about immigration representatives, see the Immigration Representatives link in the About the Department section of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/consultants**).

Many immigrants apply to become Canadian citizens after living in Canada as permanent residents (landed immigrants) for three or more years. Immigrants who become Canadian citizens have the same rights as citizens who were born in Canada. They can vote in elections, they can carry a Canadian passport and they cannot be deported. Canada also allows dual citizenship (citizenship in more than one country).

You may apply to become a Canadian citizen provided that you are not prohibited from being granted citizenship because of criminal prohibitions or a deportation order or because you represent a security risk. You must:

- be a permanent resident (landed immigrant) of Canada and have lived in Canada for at least three of the four years before applying

- be at least 18 years of age to apply on your own
- complete an application form and mail it with the appropriate documents, photographs and fee to:

  Case Processing Centre
  Citizenship and Immigration Canada
  P.O. Box 7000
  Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 6V6

- have knowledge and understanding of English or French, Canada as a nation and the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship
- take an oath of citizenship.

A child (under 18 years of age) must be a permanent resident of Canada to apply for Canadian citizenship. To apply on behalf of your child, you must already be a citizen or apply for citizenship together as a family. Children do not need to have lived in Canada for three years before applying.

For more information, see the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca**) or call 1-888-242-2100 toll-free.

Permanent Resident Card

As of December 31, 2003, permanent residents who travel abroad and return to Canada on a commercial carrier (airplane, boat, train or bus) must present a permanent resident card as proof of their status. For more information, see the Permanent Resident Card section of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca**) or call the Permanent Resident Card Call Centre at 1-800-255-4541 toll-free.

Deportation

People who are convicted of an offence in Canada may be deported depending on their status in Canada, the nature of the offence and the length of their sentence. A husband or wife who is legally a permanent resident of Canada and sponsored by his or her spouse cannot be deported because the marriage has broken down. For more information, see the Criminal Justice and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* fact sheet on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/justice.html**).

Permanent residents can be deported from Canada. For example, you may be deported if you:

- were convicted of certain criminal offences committed before coming to Canada
- do not meet the terms and conditions of your landing
- are convicted of a crime in Canada that results in a prison sentence of more than six months or could have resulted in a sentence of five years or more
- lied or used false documents to gain admission to Canada.

You may have the right to appeal a decision that could result in deportation. If you are concerned, it is a good idea to get information about immigration laws directly from the Citizenship and Immigration Call Centre (1-888-242-2100 toll-free) or consult a lawyer who specializes in immigration law.

Sponsorship

Permanent residents can apply to sponsor close family relatives for immigration to Canada. When you sponsor a relative, you must promise to support that person and their accompanying family members for a period of three to ten years, depending on their age and relationship to you. For more information, see the Sponsor Your Family section of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (**www.cic.gc.ca**) or call the CIC Call Centre toll-free at 1-888-242-2100.

FEEDBACK We'd like to hear from you...

Welcome to Alberta: Information for Immigrants

Date _____

Did you find the information in this publication useful? In what way?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How could we improve it?

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Do you have any suggestions for other products that would be of value to you?

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Would you like to receive a catalogue of our products?

Name _____

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Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Please return this form to

People, Skills and Workplace Resources
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
12th Floor, South Tower, Capital Health Centre, 10030-107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4
Fax: 780-422-5319

Explore your options on-line for Career, Learning and Employment information

www.alis.gov.ab.ca

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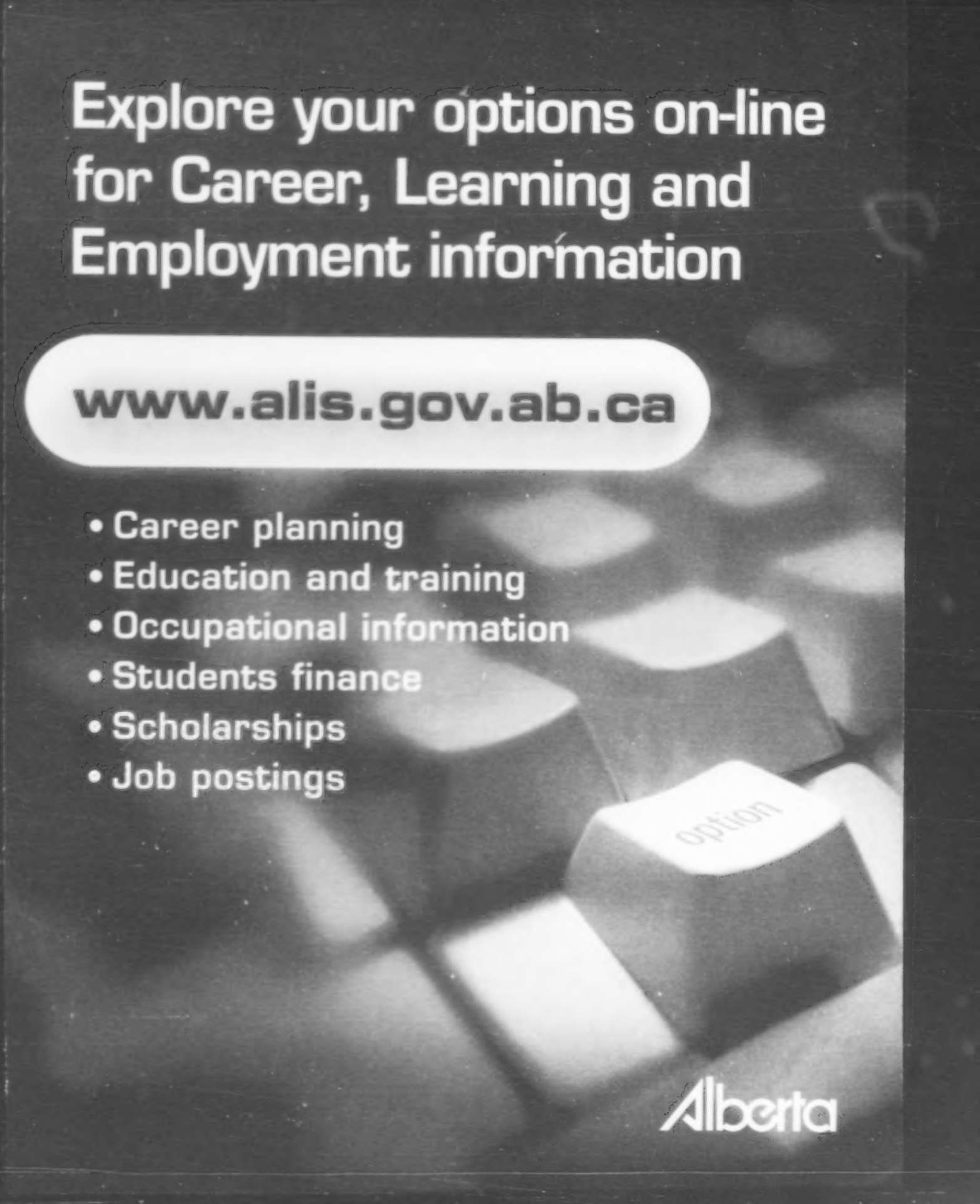

Alberta